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MEMORIALS,

PERSONAL AND HISTORICAL

OF

ADMIRAL LORD GAMBIER,

G.C.B.

LONDON :
Printed by A. Schulze, 13, Poland Street.

MEMORIALS,

PERSONAL AND HISTORICAL

OF

ADMIRAL LORD GAMBIER,

G.C.B.

WITH ORIGINAL LETTERS FROM

WILLIAM PITT FIRST LORD CHATHAM, LORD NELSON,
LORD CASTLEREAGH, LORD MULGRAVE, HENRY FOX FIRST LORD HOLLAND,
THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING.

EDITED, FROM FAMILY PAPERS,

BY GEORGIANA, LADY CHATTERTON.

"Audi alteram partem."

Second Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MEMORIALS, PERSONAL AND HISTORICAL

OF

ADMIRAL LORD GAMBIER.

CHAPTER I.

In the beginning of the year 1802 Lord Gambier proceeded to Newfoundland, as Governor of that island and commander-in-chief of the squadron appointed to protect it.

He was again called upon in May, 1804, to resume his seat at the Admiralty; and he continued there under the administration of Lord Melville, and that of Sir Charles Middleton, created Lord Barham in 1805. During this period, he received the following letter from Lord Nelson—interesting for reasons which it would be presumptuous in me to mention. I have also subjoined one to Sir Edward Pellew, written by the same honoured hand, and found among Lord Gambier's papers. The writing is singularly clear

and distinct, and has scarcely any trace of having been written with the left hand.

LORD NELSON TO SIR EDWARD PELLEW.

'Victory.' May 1st, 1804.

My dear Sir Edward,

I feel more than merely obliged by your kind and obliging letter of April 10th, which notwithstanding it has been afloat in the Mediterranean six days, conveys to us very late news. I wish our government in their important communications with me would direct their dispatches to Mr. Frere, at Madrid, and direct him to forward them by a confidential person to Barcelona, where almost every week I send a frigate for information: then such distressing circumstances as have happened to the cutter could not take place. Buonaparte read all the public dispatches on April 16th. I wish they had choaked him. I wish I was sure that our letters are not read by the way; however, what I am going to say cannot do much harm—the French have fourteen thousand men ready for embarkation at Toulon—as many more in the heel of Italy. They only want more ships, and my information leads me to suppose that certainly the squadron is destined for the Mediterranean, and also the Brest fleet, either before or after they may have thrown their cargo of troops on shore in Ireland, Egypt, and the Morea, supposed to be their next

object after their English and Irish schemes. Our force here is not equal to such a force united to the Toulon fleet, which is ten sail of the line, seven of which are full manned.

No.

80 Bucentaur, Vice Admiral La Touche Tréville.
80 Formidable.
80 Indomptable, filling inner road.
80 Neptune, new.
74 Scipion.
73 Hannibal.
74 Swift.
74 Berwick, inner road.
74 Mont Blanc.
74 Intrepid, inner road, formerly Spanish.
74 Atlas, in the Arsenal.

Seven frigates.

Our ships, hulks many of them, are but in a very indifferent state, however we can * nine sail of the line at sea. I do not choose to say more upon this subject, but this I may pride myself upon, that no man ever commanded a fleet better manned, more healthy, or where greater unanimity prevailed, than the one I have the honour of commanding. I believe the Russian fleet from the Black Sea is by this time in the Mediterranean; their object I can only guess at, for I have not a word of information or a scrap of a pen from England since the end of January.

* Word illegible.

I am truly sensible of the honour you do me, in expressing a wish to serve under me, but you have always, my dear Sir Edward, proved yourself so equal to command a fleet, that it would be a sin to place you in any other situation; and my services are very nearly at an end, for in addition to other infirmities, I am nearly blind. However, I hope to fight one more battle, and then, unless my health and sight mend, which is not very likely, I ought perhaps to lay down the cudgels, and console myself with the idea that there are so many more able officers than ever I could pretend to be, ready to take them up. Captain Murray and Keats are very well, and desire their kind regards, and if Lewis, Grorge Martin, or Sutton, are with you, remember me kindly to them, or any other of my old friends; and believe me ever, my dear Sir Edward, your much obliged friend and servant.

NELSON AND BRONTE.

LORD NELSON TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

'Victory,' October 2nd, 1805.

My dear Sir,

The enclosed from Captain Morris is to state a very hard case, that of a lieutenant being appointed over the head of his first-lieutenant, and which the Admiralty allowed him to select. We should all feel most severely warm in his situation.

I have told him the Admiralty never could mean to take away the universal privilege granted of a captain's choosing his first-lieutenant, but it was out of my power to bestir it, but that he must rest patiently for the Admiralty decision, and that I would send his letter to you.

Sir Robert Calder has wrote for his enquiry,* and I have, for reasons given to Lord Barham, fixed (however great the loss of such a ship as the 'Prince of Wales' may be to me,) that she should carry his flag to Spithead. The Admiralty may very soon, if they please, send her out again. The 'Dreadnought' sails worse than can be conceived; and, in short, I could not desert Calder in adversity. But I cannot alter my first opinion of the great necessity of an enquiry taking place; he thinks he can prove that he did all which was possible—I hope it will turn out so. He appears to have had the ships at Ferrol more in his head than the squadron in sight, believing that they would come forth. Upon such a very important enquiry as this must be, as many Admirals I hope will be collected as possible, for he lays all his stress upon other considerations than fighting the enemy's squadron, if he could have done it, ***which he denies to be pos-***

* In consequence of which request he was tried at Portsmouth in December following, "for not bringing the French fleet to action a second time off Ferrol" in the previous month of July. The result of the trial was—a reprimand for "an error in judgment."

sible. I have ventured to recommend Calder to keep to that, *prove it,* and his character is retrieved. I am to have a letter from him this day desiring that Captains Lechmere and Brown may go home with him as evidence. The captains, I understand, are willing: if that is so, I shall appoint acting captains. If they are not willing, the Admiralty will do what they may think proper. Durham I also hear is in a similar situation. * * * must also go—what a loss to me, but how can I help myself?

I shall put Sir William Bolton acting into a frigate, if I can get a captain of a frigate to go acting into one of the ships, and some good commander into the other, and likewise into a frigate.

I left with Mr. Thompson* a very pressing memorandum to show Lord Barham at a convenient opportunity, respecting my nephew, Sir W. B., having a frigate. Captain Sutton of the 'Amphion,' was, and I dare say is, willing to meet my wishes, therefore I request, if any of these captains do not come out again, that the arrangement made by the Admiralty may fix my nephew in a good frigate. I have wrote enough to Lord Barham, but I will thank you to read to him my letter about Sir Robert Calder and my nephew.

I find the fleet very fair; they are very short

* Lord Barham's Secretary.

of water, therefore I must begin sending into the Mediterranean.

* * * came out with an entire rotten main mast, which is going to be shifted at Gibraltar.

'Endymion' has both main-mast and bowsprit sprung; however, I hope with the frigates ordered me, and 'Apollo' and 'Sibylle,' that I shall be able to keep the eight heavy frigates off Cadiz and with the fleet, for it is to the day of battle and only to that day I anxiously look.

I am always, my dear Admiral, with great esteem,

Your most faithful servant

NELSON AND BRONTE.

HANNAH MORE TO LORD BARHAM.

Endorsed thus—[received 5th, answered 8th].*

My dear Lord,

Your kind letters always give us the greatest satisfaction, which is increased by hearing from all quarters of the excellent state of your health, your looks, and your spirits I hope you have stood the late heavy rains and damp season better than Patty and I have done.

I am truly glad you continue to have so many pleasant and amiable friends about you. It is

* Of May (?) 1805. The letter seems to refer to the coming motion on Catholic Emancipation, which Mr. Fox brought forward on the 10th.

good for you and for them. Happy should I be to join once more in the society of a place I have so much reason to love, but fear I shall not accomplish it this summer. Everything now at Teston must by this time have reached such a high state of perfection, that I think even *you* cannot be able to devise any further improvement.

We have been much amused the last winter evenings by reading Dr. Clarke's Travels. I should have been extremely entertained with his Russia, as that is rather novel ground to us; but I was vexed to see him seek every opportunity which presented itself to belabour those brave Russians with every kind of abuse, and when no occasion presented itself for abusing them, he went out of his way in search of it. I hope the Russian Ambassador who is here cannot read English. His account of the Holy Land is highly interesting, though he travelled through it so rapidly as to make his descriptions rather superficial. It is, however, very pleasing to observe the seriousness with which he remarks on everything relating to this sacred spot, and the illustrations he brings from actual appearances of the truth of the Scripture accounts. For these expensive books and some others, I am indebted to the kindness of a charming friend, Lady Olivia Sparrow; you have doubtless heard of her. She is one of the most interesting persons I ever met with; she was so kind to

come from Huntingdon in the middle of winter to spend a few days with us. She is a young and beautiful widow of high rank, with fascinating manners and excellent understanding.

She will, I trust, be made a very important example in her own class, because she is so engaging that she will make religion appear amiable to some who are not disposed to like it for its own sake.

Our sweet friend, Charemile Grant, I rejoice to hear is married to a man worthy of her; in addition to this I have the satisfaction to learn that those two highly accomplished young men, her brothers, are acquiring high reputation, and will probably be among the most distinguished characters of their time. Their sound principles will render their fine talents doubly valuable.

We are anxiously waiting the event of the Catholic question in Parliament.

Patty joins in all that can express kindness and regard with,

My dear Lord, yours ever,

H. More.

CHAPTER II.

On the death of Mr. Pitt in 1806, Lord Gambier vacated his seat at the Admiralty, but was re-appointed in 1807.

The following summer he was appointed Commander-in-chief of the naval forces sent against Copenhagen. The reader will, I believe, pardon me for referring his memory to the state of Europe at that period.

The British Ministers had reasons for surmising that by the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, Russia had agreed with France to seize the fleets of Denmark and Portugal—thus compelling them to join the confederacy against England—a policy to which Denmark was, both by feeling and supposed self interest, well inclined.

"In these circumstances the Cabinet of Great Britain had a most serious duty to perform. They were menaced with an attack from the combined navies of Europe, amounting to a 180 sail of the line; and of that immense force they were well

aware that the Baltic fleet would form the right wing."* "We were well aware," writes General Jomini, speaking in the person of Napoleon, "that *Denmark would hasten to throw herself into our arms.* If England refused the proffered mediation of Russia, the whole maritime forces of the Continent were to be employed against her, and they could muster 180 sail of the line. In a few years this force could be raised to 250; with the aid of such a fleet and my immense flotilla, it was by no means impossible to lead an European army to London. One hundred ships of the line employed against her colonies in the two hemispheres would have sufficed to draw off a large portion of the British navy; while eighty more assembled in the Channel would have sufficed to assure the passage of the flotilla, and avenge the outraged rights of nations."†

Thus circumstanced, the British Cabinet promptly resolved to demand that the Danish fleet should be delivered up to them—promising to restore it in equally good condition on the termination of the war with France. This demand was to be backed by a land and sea force; and the measure was carried out with such promptitude and activity, that the first half of the naval armament, with Admiral Gambier, sailed from the Downs on the 26th of July (scarcely a fortnight after the resolu-

* Alison's "History of Europe," Vol. vi. chap. 48, p. 464. † Ibid.

tion of Ministers had been taken), and the remainder followed three days afterwards.

"In a public Assembly of all the ambassadors of Europe at the Tuileries on the 16th of August, the Emperor Napoleon demanded of the Portuguese Ambassador whether he had transmitted to the Court of Lisbon his orders to join their fleet to the general maritime confederacy against England, and confiscate all English property within their dominions. And having said this, he immediately turned round to the Danish Ambassador, and asked him whether he had done the same. The note addressed to the Portuguese Government was immediately communicated by its Minister to the British Cabinet, that to the Danish was concealed, and its existence even denied. Thus, at the very time that the English expedition was, unknown to France, approaching the Danish shores, the diplomatic papers and public words of Napoleon were affording decisive evidence of his preconceived designs against the Danish fleet, while the conduct of their government was equally characteristic of an inclination to slide, without opposition, into the required hostility against this country."*

* Alison's "History of Europe," Vol. vi., chap. 48, p. 474. Vide also Lord Wellesley's and Lord Hawkesbury's Statements in Parliament.

The following despatches and private letters will carry on the narrative of events.

LORD CASTLEREAGH TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Secret.]

30th July.

My dear Sir,

In the hurry of dispatching Lieutenant-General Barnard, and supplying the Foreign Office with copies of my instructions to yourself and Lord Cathcart, I have not been able to get a copy of my orders of this date to Lord Cathcart* to forward to you, but they shall go by the next conveyance, and General Barnard, who carries them under a flying seal, is desired to communicate them to you on his arrival. We look forward with anxious hope that all will do well, The † sails to-day, and I shall now begin to consider what help you may want from home to bring away the Danish fleet, if either by negociation or force it is destined to visit England. We rely on your giving the army your marines and a large corps of sailors, if requisite for land operations, provided you can spare them; we hope about 5000. In great haste.

Yours very faithfully,

CASTLEREAGH.

* Commander of the Land Forces. † Word illegible.

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.]

Admiralty, July 30th, 1807.

Dear Gambier,*

The bearer of this letter will have accompanied the vessel which is to carry Mr. Jackson, His Majesty's envoy, on a special mission to the Crown Prince, the precise period of Mr. Jackson's arrival at Tönningen will have been ascertained by the commanding officer of this vessel, and upon this will depend the period of eight and twelve days limited for the landing of troops and for the commencement of their operations, as detailed in the instructions to Lord Cathcart, a duplicate of which will be carried out by Lieutenant-General Burrard, with whom you will have communication. Mr. Jackson sets out this evening, I have not time therefore to enter into more detail; I have desired Pole to apply for the duplicates of all despatches and instructions to be sent out to you by this conveyance.

Ever yours sincerely and faithfully,

MULGRAVE.

P.S.—If the vessel sent with this should be one of Admiral Douglas's squadron, you will be so good as to send her back, as we are very poor in small vessels.

* Who had sailed from the Downs on the 26th.

The English Government selected Mr. Jackson as Envoy Extraordinary to the Crown Prince of Denmark, because they wished to avoid hostilities if possible—Mr. Jackson having long resided at the Court of Berlin, and being "supposed to enjoy, in a very high degree, the confidence of the Northern Powers."*

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[Secret and Private.]

Admiralty, July 31st, 1807.

Dear Gambier,

You will receive, at the same time with this letter, directions from the Admiralty to detain the Baltic Convoy till further orders. The fact is that the Convoy sailed from a mistake, or rather in consequence of the imperfect course of practice in the notification of embargoes from the Admiralty. Under the circumstances, the only safe measure for the trade appears to be that of detaining them till you can receive further instructions, or obtain more perfect information of the disposition of the Baltic Powers towards this country. It would obviously be dangerous for our trade to go into Danish ports till the great question shall have been decided; at the same time, any direct caution against going into Russian ports would be a measure of very delicate and important consider-

* Alison's "History of Europe," vol. vi., p. 467.

ation at this moment, when we are in alliance and amity with Russia, and whilst we are totally ignorant of the conditions of peace concluded between that Power and France. You will, of course, either detain the convoy at the entrance of the Sound, or allow them to go into Gottenburgh, as may be most expedient for their safety. You will receive the further directions of the Government as soon as they can be sent. I am desirous, by private communication, to put you as much as possible in possession of the views and feelings of the Government, that you may take your line with the more ease and confidence.

Ever yours sincerely and faithfully,

MULGRAVE.

The next letter is addressed to Lord Gambier by the English Minister at the Court of the King of Sweden.

MR. PIERREPOINT TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

Stralsund, August 5, 1807.

Sir,

I have despatched the messenger Schow by the 'Orestes' with letters for England, in reply to those conveyed to me by Captain Lapenotière, and I have to request the favour of you to forward him in any way that you may think proper, as in the

event of your not judging it expedient to spare a vessel further than Elsinore, I should in that case, have no objection to his landing in Sweden to pursue his journey by land to Gottenburgh, to embark on board the packet.

We are here at the twenty-third day's investment,* and have been for some days past expecting the arrival of the enemy's battering train and the bombardment to begin, but as yet everything is quiet with the exception of our continual fire from the ramparts upon the innumerable batteries that the enemy is erecting on every side. The French proceed slowly and with caution, but not I think the less formidably on that account for the ultimate fate of the fortress, which will I fear not hold out long after it is once vigorously attacked.†

I have the honour to be with great truth and respect.

Your most obedient and humble servant,

HENRY PIERREPOINT.

MR. CANNING TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private and Secret.]

Foreign Office, August 12th, 1807.

Sir,

The information which has been received here,

* By Marshal Brune. ED.

† The Swedes evacuated the place on the 19th, after destroying their magazines, spiking their guns, &c.

leaving little doubt of the agreement of the Court of St. Petersburgh to stipulations* highly unfavourable to this country, I have written to Lord Granville Leveson, His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburgh, to authorize him to communicate to you any occasion which may possibly arise, wherein the appearance of a British naval force in the upper part of the Baltic might be useful in giving effect to his representations.

I have apprized him that I can by no means answer for any such notice on his part finding you in a situation to make a detachment from the fleet under your command. This must of course depend upon the execution of the immediate service on which you are employed. And, therefore, I have neither instructed him to write to you officially, nor authorized him to expect an unconditional compliance on your part with any intimation that he may send to you.

For the same reason, I do not write officially to you, or to the Lords of the Admiralty. But as Lord Mulgrave thinks that you will be more satisfied in acting under his letter to you, if accompanied with one from me, I have thought it right to communicate to you directly the substance of what I have written to Lord Granville L. Gower; and to assure you whatever service you may under-

* Viz: contained in the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit.

take in consequence of his suggestions will be entirely approved by His Majesty.

I have the honour to be, with the highest regard, and every good wish for your success, Sir,

Your most sincere and obedient servant,

GEORGE CANNING.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[Private and secret.]

Foreign Office, August 13th, 1807.

Sir,

This letter will be delivered to you by Sir Stephen Shairp, His Majesty's Consul at St. Petersburgh.

You will have the goodness to forward him to his destination by a fast sailing vessel. And you will transmit by him whatever communications you may have to make to His Majesty's Ambassadors at St. Petersburgh, respecting the result of any operations off Copenhagen; and respecting your ability to furnish, if necessary, a detachment from the fleet under your command, for any service in the other parts of the Baltic.

I have the honour to be, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

GEORGE CANNING.

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private and Secret.]

Admiralty, August 13, 1807.

Dear Gambier,

This letter will be delivered to you by Sir Stephen Shairp; he will carry to Lord G. L. Gower any letters you may wish to convey to His Excellency, stating the force you may be enabled to detach under various circumstances. I am disposed to be of opinion that a mere demonstration of force in the neighbourhood of the Russian territories, without a sufficient aggression on that the part of that Government to justify hostilities, might rather tend to justify the adverse disposition of that Government; these circumstances, however, can only be determined by the information which you shall receive from Lord G. L. Gower, and upon his statement of the effect likely to be produced by the adoption of naval operations of whatever description. Sir Stephen Shairp is desirous of having one or two officers in the vessel which shall convey him up the Baltic, who may be capable of observing and ascertaining the strength of the fortifications or batteries of the different naval stations in the ports of the Baltic. These officers may be sent either from the fleet or army as you and Lord Cathcart may determine.

It is desirable that Sir Stephen Shairp should be despatched with as little delay as possible, as a

leading and most important object of his mission is to hasten and facilitate the departure of the supplies of hemp, &c., contracted for, on account of the navy.

As the limited period of negociation expires to-morrow, we shall be in anxious expectation of news subsequent to that period. The information from all quarters tends to confirm not only the wisdom but the absolute necessity of the great measure to which we have resorted. As we have intelligence of your disposition having been made, for the interruption of the reinforcements to Zealand; I trust we may look with flattering hope to ultimate success.

Ever yours sincerely,

MULGRAVE.

FROM LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

A FRAGMENT.

* * * a discretionary employment of the force under your command under the pressure of the moment, than to authorize Lord G. L. Gower to call upon you under certain circumstances, and to embarrass you at the same time with a string of conditional instructions, which might after all not meet the exact state of things at the time, and might place you under a difficulty in deciding how far you might or might not be bound by your orders to divide your force upon the existing circumstances.

You have, in your letter to Pole, expressed a wish for a further supply of small armed vessels. I am apprehensive that it will be impossible to add to your force of that description from hence, unless we could find any means of collecting an additional number of seamen—we are very bare on all points at home, and the rapid and violent measures of the American Government oblige us to look anxiously to that quarter both for naval and military reinforcements, which (as you well know) cannot be sent out to Halifax and Canada many days later than the period of which I am writing to you. Could you not contrive to purchase Swedish craft proper for gun-boats, and man and arm them from the fleet under your command—any expense incurred for that object will be cheerfully answered by the Government. I wish we could do all you wish and all you want, but our unappropriated column has become a blank, and our vessels on *various services* are thinly scattered. We wait with a degree of anxious confidence for the result of your operations; with every feeling of public interest and private regard to wish you full success: you cannot doubt how earnestly I do so.

Ever yours sincerely

MULGRAVE.

On the evening of the 15th of August, the

whole British force arrived off Wibeck, a village situated about midway between Elsineur and Copenhagen, where Lord Gambier was joined by the troops that had previously been sent to Stralsund, under Lord Cathcart. The army disembarked without the smallest opposition* and on the day following, the 16th, the joint commanders issued the following proclamation.

PROCLAMATION SIGNED BY ADMIRAL GAMBIER AND LORD CATHCART, ON ARRIVING IN ZEALAND.†

Whereas the present treaties of peace, and the changes of government and of territory, acceded to by so many powers, have so far increased the influence of France on the Continent of Europe, as to render it impossible for Denmark, if it desires to be neutral, to preserve its neutrality, and absolutely necessary for those who continue to resist the French aggression, to take means to prevent the arms of a neutral power from being turned against them; in this view, His Majesty cannot regard the present position of Denmark with indifference, and he has therefore sent negociators with ample powers to his Danish Majesty, to request, in the most amicable manner, such explanations as the circumstances require, and a concurrence in such measures

* Marshall's Naval Biography.

† Vide London Gazette.

as can alone give security against the further mischief which the French meditate through the acquisition of the Danish navy. The king, therefore, has judged it expedient to demand the temporary deposit of the Danish ships of the line in one of His Majesty's ports.

The deposit seems to be just, and so indispensably necessary, under the relative situation of the neutral and belligerant powers, that His Majesty has further deemed it a duty to himself and his people to support his demand by a powerful fleet, and by an army amply supplied with every necessary for the most active and determined enterprise. We come, therefore, to your shores, inhabitants of Zealand, not as enemies, but in self-defence, to prevent those who have so long disturbed the peace of Europe from compelling the force of your navy to be employed against us. *We ask deposit, we have not looked to capture.* So far from it, the most solemn pledge has been offered to your Government, and it is hereby renewed, in the name and by the express commands of the king our master, that if our demand is acceded to, *every ship belonging to the Danish navy shall, at the conclusion of a general peace, be restored to her*, in the same condition and state of equipment as when received under the protection of the British flag. It is in the power of your government, by a word, to sheathe our swords,

most reluctantly drawn against you. You will be treated on the footing of the most friendly powers; property of all sorts will be respected and preserved, the most severe discipline enforced, every article required paid for at a fair price. But if these offers are rejected, and the machinations of France render you deaf to the voice of reason and the call of friendship, the innocent blood that will be shed, and the horrors of a besieged and bombarded capital, must fall on your heads, and on those of your cruel advisers.

(Signed) J. GAMBIER.
CATHCART.

GENERAL LORD CATHCART TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.]

Wilbeck, 16th August, 1807.

My dear Admiral Gambier,

I have endorsed a copy of my lettter to Lord Rosslyn, which will at once acquaint you what my wishes are, and what I have said to his Lordship. If you approve, I hope you will have the goodness to give the necessary orders accordingly.

I have also added a short letter to Lord Castlereagh, to announce the disembarkation.

I have the honour to remain,
My dear Admiral,
Your faithful servant,
CATHCART.

I will be obliged to you to return me the copies, as I have no others. If the 'Silvia' does not sail till to-morrow, I will write to Lord Castlereagh in more official form, and give an account of the investment.

LORD CATHCART TO LORD ROSSLYN.

Wilbeck, 16th August, 1807.

My dear Lord,

I wrote to you on the 14th by the 'Quad' schooner, to acquaint you that it was my wish that you should send the cavalry, horse-artillery, store ships, victuallers, and hospital ships to this fleet, except what was necessary for the infantry and artillery which remain with you, and also the staff not attached to your corps, and that the Admiral had sent orders to Captain Lilliecrap to forward such vessels as you might point out.

As these troops are very much wanted, we look with anxiety for their arrival.

In pursuance of the plan I detailed to you in the same letter, I have this day succeeded in landing a great part of the force at Wibeck, without opposition, and am about to proceed to encamp this evening between Lyngbye and Charlottenland; from whence I propose to march to-morrow to Freidericksburg, and to occupy all the avenues to the city from the side of Zealand, disembarking

what remains on board, and your cavalry, between Charlottenland and Copenhagen. Your Lordship will be pleased to disembark your infantry and artillery on the south end of the Isle of Amoch, as soon as the Admiral shall send the necessary instructions and protection, and you will be pleased to advance towards Copenhagen, and to take a position out of reach of the cannon of the place, from whence the Admiral will furnish the means of keeping up a communication with the right of the corps at Friedericksburg.

Dragoe will probably be the place where battering ordnance, if necessary, will be landed.

I enclose herewith, for your Lordship's information and guidance, a copy of a proclamation which has been issued by the Admiral and me on this occasion, and also of the General Order of last night. Your horses and those of your staff are arrived, and as soon as the other horses are taken out of the transport, she will be sent round to your Lordship.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) CATHCART.

"A calm ensued, which, preventing the ships from approaching the coast to land the heavy ordnance and siege equipage, retarded for several days the approaches, and afforded the Danes a breathing time, of which they actively availed themselves.

The heavy artillery was at length landed, and brought up to the trenches. The assistance of the sailors enabled the works to be prosecuted with great rapidity, and on the 1st of September they were so far advanced as to have everything in readiness for the bombardment to commence."*

MR. PIERREPOINT TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

Götemutz, Island of Rugen, August 25th, 1807, at night.

Sir,

I am this moment honoured with your letter of the 28th of this month, by the 'Whiting' schooner, and I lose no time in requesting Captain Deanes to despatch her again with letters for Government, which I have the honour to entrust to your care, and which have been waiting since yesterday morning for the arrival of a vessel to convey them. I learn from your letter the change which has been ordered in the destination of the 'Charger' and 'Censor' gun-brigs, and shall not fail to notify it to the King of Sweden, although I cannot conceal from you the awkwardness which I feel in being obliged to break a promise to His Swedish Majesty, which I had entered into by the direction of Government, in the offer which I was ordered to make of naval succour. The French are in possession of boats, but of no vessels at all, and if

* Alison's "History of Europe," vol. vi. p. 470.

they were, none of a draft of water exceeding five foot could come out of the Port of Stralsund by any other channel than the south-east coast of the Island of Rugen, which the late station of the gun-brigs off Griefswaldt, the mouth of the Peene, would have enabled them to watch. The 'Cherub' is an ample protection on the side of Commodore Keats against the attempt of any smaller sort of vessel to force a passage on the north-west side of Rugen by Wittno.

It is on account of the extensive means that are in the enemy's possession of effecting a landing in a variety of places at once, that it becomes necessary to have a vessel both at Wittno and * to prevent our retreat being cut off. But it is not probable that the attempt against this island will be deferred much longer. His Swedish Majesty, however, will stay here to the last, and I shall of course remain with him till he takes his departure.

The enemy took advantage of the thunder-storm last night to cross over in rafts to the Dänholm, a small island in the passage between this place and Stralsund, and took the fort by assault, making the garrison (about 450 men) prisoners. This acquisition is, I am sorry to say, of considerable advantage to the French, as it enables them to

* Name illegible.

work unmolested at their rafts, besides affording the means of erecting batteries to cover their landing on this island.

I have the honour to be, with great truth and regard,

Sir,

Your most faithful humble servant,

HENRY PIERREPOINT.

P.S.—May I request you to send the letter to Mr. Fenwick, the Consul, by the first safe opportunity, if he should be still at Elsinore.

LORD CATHCART TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

Head-Quarters, August 26th, 1807.

My dear Admiral,

A supposed Russian courier has brought me a passport from you to go to Allena, and to pass the Belt. I have at once perceived he is not a Russian, he does not know a word of the language, and as General Sir A. Wellesley has marched, if this man was allowed to proceed, he would pass directly through his corps to General * (our enemy) and relate the preparation he saw. I therefore send him back, in hopes that you will send him back to Sweden to find his way to Kiel, or over to Jutland, or that you would keep him at any rate till

* Word illegible.

after General Sir A. Wellesley has begun his attack.

Ever, my dear Admiral, most sincerely yours,

CATHCART.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

26th August, 1807, 2 p.m.

My dear Admiral,

I herewith send you a draft of a summons. If you will make such alterations as you think necessary, and have it copied and sign and seal it, I will add my signature, and send it in when we are ready.

I doubt that this will be the case on Monday. But as soon as I see a prospect of being ready, I will acquaint you, in order that you may have time for such corresponding arrangement of your bombarding train as you may think fit to advance.

Sir Home* waits to see the engineer, in order that, if possible, a battery may be prepared this night near the Chalk Work, to check the gun-boats and block-ship. Ever yours,

CATHCART.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Head-Quarters, August 26, 1807.

My dear Admiral Gambier,

I send you herewith an enclosure containing a

* Popham.

letter from the Swedish Consul at Elsineur, covering one for him from Captain Dickson of H.M.S. 'Orion.'

The admission of the mail, unless previously searched, to land in Zealand, would be to authorize a direct communication between the Crown Prince and this island. Perhaps it may be possible to evade sending an answer for some days, in which case I will send back the postillion with a civil note to say that I will take the earliest opportunity of communicating with you, and that your decision shall be notified to him by a flag of truce. I have now the pleasure to acquaint you that yesterday afternoon the enemy's gun-boats having attacked our right, to endeavour to dislodge our pickets from the suburb, which was preserved from being burned, and troops having been seen in motion at all the gates, these troops were attacked and every where driven in.

By the able arrangements made by the several generals, the whole line of the * has been seized, and is now occupied by our riflemen. The redoubt you saw them concluding towards the citadel was turned and taken, and is now converted into a battery against the place. The village and suburb between the churchyard and the town is also ours, and was tolerably well protected by sand-bags, and † last night, we have a port

* Word illegible. † Word illegible.

at the hospital, within four hundred yards of the place, and we succeeded in mounting a battery of 24-pounders on the right to check the gun-boats, who were also driven in on our left. We shall now have mortar batteries within very short ranges to command the whole city. As some of these may soon be ready, it seems now time to summon the place; and it seems to me that they are not now entitled to the same terms formerly offered, unless they consent to deliver up the ships uninjured, and in as good state as when the place was invested. In this case it might be politic to accept them on that condition; the army, however, taking possession of the town. Because, if that condition is desired and not granted, I think they will injure the ships to the utmost, and then capitulate. The summons might be general to capitulate, considering the terms on which we stand with them; but if you think it right to try to save the ships by holding out the offer first made, I will acquiesce in your decision on that ground only.

Ever, my dear Admiral,
Faithfully and sincerely yours,
CATHCART.

P.S.—If you could pass this day on shore, it is possible that important decisions may be facilitated.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Head-Quarters, 27th August, 1807.

My dear Admiral Gambier,

Colonel Murray was admitted, but there is no answer except that it was observed in conversation that our demand was very hard. The Admiral was much hurt at the burning of Draco on the island of Amack of which I had never heard, but supposed the troops I happened to see in motion there, to have been for exercise.

We shall probably open a fire in the evening. If we do not, it will be in tenderness to the Chalk House battery, which is much wanted, and which the civil-engineer never had the least notion of abandoning.

Ever, my dear Admiral,
Most faithfully yours,
CATHCART.

I will send off my letters this evening, but if you could detain your vessel till to-morrow, she may carry our report of the firing instead of her own report that she saw it begin.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[Private.]

Head-Quarters, 29th August, 1807.

My dear Admiral,

A thousand thanks for your magnificent supply. I believe you are quite right about the Bremen

business; but the people are good, and I was the more willing to give them a chance.

We draw supply from Gottenburg. Wellesley has marched into the country: our battery of six twenty-four pounders and an eight howitzer opened with three guns at day-break on the right of the line, within nine hundred yards of the place, upon the gun-boats, whose fire and that of the town was very heavy and well directed. The battery ran down two boats in the harbour, and nearly sunk the third and largest, which was towed off by small boats, and seemed to have sustained very heavy loss, as shocking screams were heard, and she seemed to have no hands to work her. We have had three gunners wounded, and one, I fear, mortally, and some horses killed; but though the houses are much demolished none of the troops in them are hurt. The General in Copenhagen refused the four hours, and has fired into his hospital repeatedly, where he has killed some good men of ours, but missed the patients. We have not yet fired shot at the town. The mortars and stores are getting fast into the rear of their stations, and the batteries will be nearly completed this night, at least two of them—the centre one will receive its ordnance. No other news at this moment.

But ever your obliged and faithful servant,

CATHCART.

The enemy has thrown up a mortar battery in his citadel, to throw shells into the suburbs. I see one house on fire already. They will try to burn them all, and dislodge us; but the ruins will serve our purpose as well as the houses, if they should succeed.

CHAPTER III.

On the first of September, every thing being in readiness for the bombardment of Copenhagen to commence, Lord Cathcart and Admiral Gambier summoned the place, and "generously offered the same terms which had before been rejected."* The summons ran thus:

"To convince the Danish Government, and the whole world, of the reluctance with which His Majesty has recourse to arms, we, the undersigned, at the moment when our troops are before your gates, and our batteries ready to open, renew to you the offer of the same advantageous terms which we formerly proposed: viz, if you will consent to deliver up the Danish fleet, and to our carrying it away, it shall be held in deposit merely, and restored in as good a state as received, with all its equipments, as soon as the

* Alison's "History of Europe," vol. vi. p. 471.

provisions of a general peace shall have removed the necessity which occasioned this demand. But if this offer is now rejected, it cannot be repeated.

" CATHCART.
" J. GAMBIER.

"September 1, 1807."*

" Meanwhile Sir Arthur Wellesley moved with ten thousand men, against a body of twelve thousand militia, supported by a few regular troops which had assembled in the interior of the island, at Kioge ; and by a sudden attack, in which the 92nd and 52nd regiments distinguished themselves, dispersed them with a loss of several hundred killed and twelve hundred prisoners.†"

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.]

Admiralty, September 3, 1807.

Dear Gambier,

I received your letters to the twenty-third of August at four o'clock this morning. I am now writing at six o'clock in the evening, and have not had a moment till now to write to you. I cannot, however, delay expressing the entire satisfaction which I have felt at every step of your conduct. Everything has been exactly

* Alison's History of Europe. † Ibid.

such as I expected from you. You have certainly correctly understood the tenor of Lord Castlereagh's despatch of the tenth of August; at the same time it is felt by us that, hostilities having taken place, it is desirable that absolute and unconditional possession of the Danish fleet should be obtained, frigates as well as line-of-battle ships, and that all naval stores should also be brought away (and in case the island should not be retained, I think the Castle of Elsineur, in short the command of the passage of the Sound, should be destroyed), but upon this point you will probably receive more detailed instructions; what I wish particularly to impress upon your mind is that the conditional possession of the fleet, with a view to its eventual restoration, would only be a desirable result of our operations under the circumstance of some important military consideration rendering such a condition necessary or highly expedient. The discretion of judging of that contingency cannot be placed in better hands than yours and Lord Cathcart's, to whom I beg to be most kindly remembered, if you should have occasion to see him. All your wishes respecting the promotions, in consequence of the action of the 'Comus,' shall be complied with, and I will appoint Captain Heywood to a better frigate.

Ever yours sincerely,

MULGRAVE.

P.S. It will be advisable that you should communicate without delay to Lord G. L. Gower the result of your operations at Copenhagen; and you will be so good, at the same time, to forward to him the accompanying letter.

MR. CANNING TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.]

Foreign Office, September 5, 1807.

Dear Sir,

I have to thank you for your obliging attention to my two private letters. The necessary protraction of the operations at Copenhagen has of itself decided the question of ulterior objects in the Baltic. I have, therefore, only to set your mind at rest by assuring you that you will not be called upon to divide your forces for that purpose, and have not therefore to expect any official communication upon the subject.

I heartily wish you the most complete and honourable success in your present most important service; and I beg you to believe me, dear Sir, with very great regard,

Your sincere and obedient servant,

GEORGE CANNING.

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private and most secret and confidential.]

Admiralty, September 5, 1807.

Dear Gambier,*

* * So many considerations have offered themselves since your instructions and those of Lord Cathcart were first drawn, that I feel extremely anxious that things should take such a turn as would enable us to keep possession of the Island of Zealand, in conjunction with our ally the King of Sweden, in case he should have the means of furnishing such a force as would, in conjunction with the proportion we could leave of our army (the German Legion for instance), be sufficient to hold the island during the winter. You will at once see the importance of such a possession, if it can be secured. The destruction or possession of the Danish fleet will certainly be a temporary measure of great effect and importance, in as much as it will considerably lessen the resources of France for an attempt at invasion. But the Russian fleet stationed at Copenhagen would still furnish a formidable and menacing naval auxiliary at the disposal of France: we should thereby be finally and effectually shut out of the Baltic, and under the necessity of keeping a large fleet con-

* The first part is of private matters, and totally uninteresting. I have therefore left it out.

stantly watching the Russian force. The Swedish Monarchy would also be endangered by the facility with which it might be attacked by France on the side of Zealand, and by Russia on the other side. On the other hand, the possession of Zealand would afford a pledge for the restoration, at a peace, of Hanover to its lawful sovereign, of Swedish Pomerania, and also of Holstein, and any of the continental possessions of Denmark which may have been occupied by France during the war, so as to re-establish Denmark as an integral power.

Zealand, held by Great Britain and Sweden, would give those powers the entire command of the Baltic, and would tend, more than any other state of things that can be conceived, to counteract the influence of France in Russia; and to bring back the sovereign of that great empire to a due sense of his own dignity, and of the great and permanent interests of his dominions. The very existence of the Monarchy of Sweden may possibly depend upon the permanent occupation of the Island of Zealand, to the defence of which I should conceive the fleet and flotilla of Sweden might contribute. By what I can learn (but you will have better information where you are) the Belt is not frozen over twice in a century; but if it were, I should conceive that thirty or forty thousand men of regular troops would be able to maintain themselves in Copenhagen, from the impossibility of the

enemy opening trenches during the winter in such a climate, especially if there should be time to withdraw a great part of the supplies of the island within the town. But these are details which might be considered and decided on the spot, and with full knowledge of circumstances, by the British and Swedish generals who might consult upon it; but in a political point of view, the possession of Zealand, if it can be maintained, is perhaps at this time the most important to this country in Europe, and, through the influence which it may have on the conduct of Russia, to Europe itself.

It becomes, therefore, a consideration of the utmost magnitude, to determine whether the Island of Zealand can be held and defended by Sweden and England, with a view to the nature of terms of any capitulation which shall be granted to the Danes in Copenhagen and on the island. It is possible that a capitulation may have taken place before you receive this letter; but I feel it to be highly important, in case the town should still hold out, that you should be fully apprized of the feelings and opinions on this subject which I entertain in common with my colleagues. Some overture will be made on this subject by Mr. Pierrepoint to the King of Sweden; and if the arrangement I have stated can be carried into effect, I feel strongly persuaded that we shall be at our ease all over the

world, and may yet entertain a hope, if not entirely to rescue, at least to relieve the oppressed and degraded continent of Europe. This is not official, but confidential between ourselves. Mr. Canning states to me that he has information of three million pounds (fifteen million crowns) worth of naval stores being at Copenhagen; this will of course not escape your vigilance or your grasp. He mentions also a great quantity of craft on the Holstein and Jutland side of the Belt, which carried over the Danish troops to Holstein. It would be highly important, if possible, to destroy this, with a view to keeping possession of the island. Of these vessels, however, you had notice in Mr. Pole's letter of the third of September. I only repeat it as one does anything of peculiar and anxious interest; indeed, it is most probable that you had before information of these vessels, as we can scarcely expect to send you any intelligence from hence.

The south-west wind keeps us in suspense and impatience, but I do not, upon the whole, entirely regret its continuance, as it affords a more quick communication to you of the views and wishes of the Government here, and from us it only keeps the intelligence which we anticipate of everything having been done by those whom we have employed in the best and most effectual manner.

Ever yours sincerely,

MULGRAVE.

I have entered into so large a field, that I cannot avoid again observing that this letter is purely private, and in no respect official.

The offer of accommodation, (already mentioned at page 37) was rejected. "The bombardment consequently began, and continued with uncommon vigour during three days and nights, except that the British slackened fire for a short time on the evening of the first day, in the vain hope that the Danes would give in. The inhabitants sustained with heroic resolution the flaming tempest, and all classes were indefatigable in their endeavours to carry water to the quarters where the city had taken fire. At length the obvious danger of the total destruction of the city overcame the firmness of General Peymann, to whom the Prince Royal had delegated his command; and on the forenoon of the 5th a flag of truce appeared at the British outposts to treat for a capitulation. But the period of equal negotiation was past; the Danes had perilled all on the issue of the sword; and no other terms would be agreed to, but the unconditional surrender of the whole fleet, with all the artillery and naval stores which the place contained. A capitulation was signed to this effect, two days afterwards, in virtue of which the British troops

were immediately put in possession of the citadel, gates, and arsenal; and by the united efforts of friends and foes a stop was at length put to the progress of the conflagration, but not before it had consumed an eighth part of the city.

"By the terms of the capitulation it had been stipulated that the English should evacuate the citadel of Copenhagen within six weeks, or a shorter time, if the fleet could be got ready before the expiry of that period. But such was the expedition with which the operations were conducted, and the activity displayed by both the naval and military departments, that long before the expiry of that period the fleet was equipped, the stores on board, and the evacuation completed."*

DESPATCH FROM ADMIRAL GAMBIER TO THE HON. WELLESLEY POLE.

'Prince of Wales,' September 7, 1807.

Sir,

The communications which I have already had the honour to transmit to you will have made the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty acquainted with the proceedings of the fleet under my command, down to the 2nd inst. I have now to add that the mortar batteries which have been erected by the army in the several positions they have taken round Copenhagen, together with the bomb-

* Abridged from Alison's "Hist. of Europe," vol. vi. p. 471—2.

vessels, which were placed in convenient situations, began the bombardment in the morning of that day, with such power and effect that in a short time the town was set on fire, and by the repeated discharges of our artillery was kept in flames in different places until the evening of the 5th, when a considerable part of it being consumed, and the conflagration having arrived at a great height, threatening the speedy destruction of the whole city, the general commanding the garrison sent out a flag of truce, desiring an armistice, to afford time to treat for a capitulation. After some correspondence had passed between the Danish General, Lord Cathcart, and myself, certain articles were agreed upon, of which I have the honour to transmit you a copy. From these their Lordships will perceive that all the Danish ships and vessels of war (of which I enclose a list), with the stores in the arsenal, were to be delivered up to such persons as should be appointed to receive them on the part of His Majesty. I accordingly appointed Sir Home Popham for this purpose; and having made the necessary arrangements for equipping them with the utmost despatch, I have committed the execution of this service to Vice-Admiral Stanhope, in whose ability and exertions I can place the fullest confidence.

I am happy on this occasion to express the warm sense I entertain of the cordial co-operation of the

army, by whose exertions, with the favourable concurrence of circumstances under Divine Providence ever since we left England, our ultimate success has been more immediately obtained. I must also convey to their Lordships, in terms of the highest approbation and praise, the conspicuous zeal and earnest endeavours of every officer and man under my command, for the accomplishment of this service; and although the operations of the fleet have not been of a nature to afford me a general and brilliant occasion for adding fresh testimony to the numerous records of the bravery of British seamen and marines, yet the gallantry and energy displayed by the advanced squadron of sloops, bombs, gunbrigs, &c., which were employed, under the command of Captain Paget, to cover the operations of the left wing of the army from the Danish flotilla, ought not to be passed over in silence.

I have beheld with admiration the steady courage and arduous exertion with which, on one occasion in particular, they sustained for more than four hours a heavy and incessant cannonade from the Danish batteries, blockships, praams and gunboats, in a situation where, from the shallowness of the water, it was impossible to bring any of the large ships to their support.

I feel it my duty to make a particular acknowledgment of the aid I have derived from Sir Home Popham, captain of the fleet, whose prompt re-

sources and complete knowledge of his profession, especially of that branch which is connected with the operations of an army, qualify him in a particular manner for the arduous and varied duties with which he has been charged. I herewith enclose a list of the killed and wounded.

I beg leave to refer their Lordships to Captain Collier, whom I have charged with this despatch, for any further particulars they may desire to know.

I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

J. GAMBIER.

COMMODORE KEATS* TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

'Superb,' September 9th, 1807.

Dear Sir,

Permit me to offer you my sincere congratulations on the successful issue of an expedition that reflects so much honour on the commanders of it, and which at one blow has deprived our mortal enemy of a whole navy.

The flotilla you have sent we are joining, and shall be disposed of without delay. Westerly winds being prevalent at this season, the 'Ganges' will, in all likelihood, be the only ship I shall order over the grounds, and that because she is

* He commanded the squadron in the Great Belt, stationed there by Admiral Gambier to cut off all communication between Zealand and the mainland, or islands adjacent.

now to the eastward of me. As the transports cannot yet have entered the Belt I shall recall them, and send them without delay to you. The 'Cherub' was quiet yesterday at her old anchorage, from which I conclude no alteration had at that time taken place at Rugen.

I have the honour to remain,
Dear Sir,
With much respect, your obedient, humble servant
R. G. KEATS.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

London, Wednesday, September 16th, 1807.

Sir,

It is with sentiments of the highest satisfaction that I obey the commands which I have received from the King, to acquaint you with His Majesty's sense of your eminent and most important services, and of his determination to give you the most distinguished testimony of his unqualified approbation of them, by conferring upon you the dignity of the Peerage of the United Kingdom, in which it is His Majesty's intention at the same time to include Lord Cathcart. So valuable an acquisition as the town and citadel of Copenhagen, together with the Danish fleet and arsenal, which by your abilities has been placed at the disposal of His Majesty, must under any circumstances

have secured to you His Majesty's approbation; but the manner in which that extraordinary achievement has been performed, and the small effusion of the blood of His Majesty's subjects with which it has been obtained, render it more peculiarly acceptable to the parental feelings of His Majesty, and manifest a description of qualification and talents which cannot but enhance the merits of this service in a manner no less advantageous to the national character than honourable to those eminent persons to whom the conduct of it has been happily entrusted.

But after the peculiar testimony of approbation which I have the happiness of being directed by His Majesty to convey to you, it would ill become me to obtrude upon you my sentiments of this brilliant transaction. I will only request you to accept my most sincere congratulations upon the occasion, and to be assured of the satisfaction with which I contemplate the testimony of his royal favour with which His Majesty is pleased to distinguish you, and the impression which your services appear to have made upon the public mind.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

PORTLAND.

You will be so good as to let me know the name

which you wish to assume on being raised to the dignity of the Peerage.

LORD MULGRAVE TO MRS. MORTON PITT.

Admiralty, September 16th, 1807.

Dear Mrs. Pitt,

Although you will have heard from others of the complete success of your brother—and my friend—Gambier, I must be the first to tell you that the King, in reward of his services, has been graciously pleased to confer on him the high honour of a Peerage. Remember me kindly to Pitt. Communicate this to Miffy,

And believe ever your most faithful servant,

MULGRAVE.

LADY MULGRAVE TO MRS. MORTON PITT.

Allow me, my dear Mrs. Morton Pitt, to add my hearty congratulations to you upon your worthy brother's safety, as well as upon his deservedly acquired honours, which I do with the greatest pleasure, being ever,

Yours truly,

C. MULGRAVE.

LORD CASTLEREAGH TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.]

Downing Street, September 16th, 1807, 6 P.M.

My dear Sir,

Lord Mulgrave will have apprized you that His Majesty's gracious approbation of your conduct will not admit, were my letter delayed, of my addressing you by *the above title.* Accept my warmest congratulations on your approaching honours; honours which you will doubly enjoy and value, as growing out of great and eminent public services.

The conduct of the fleet and army which has achieved this great service at Copenhagen will long be studied and admired, as an example of union, zeal, courage, and determination; and in proportion as the situation in which you were placed, and the enemy to which you were opposed, was difficult and delicate, you have had an opportunity of combining in your conduct, throughout the whole transaction, every quality that we could wish to have distinguished it.

Postponing till the King's confidential servants have deliberated upon the important matter contained in your and Lord Cathcart's dispatches, all discussion or instructions on these subjects, allow me thus heartily to offer to you my personal and grateful thanks for having fulfilled every wish

I could form with respect to the service with which you were entrusted, and the instructions under which you acted.

Yours, my dear Sir,
In truth most sincerely and faithfully
CASTLEREAGH.

CHAPTER IV.

TO MR. SAMUEL GAMBIER FROM MR. CANNING.

Foreign Office, September 16th, 1807.

My dear Sir,

I wish I had been in the way to receive and return your congratulations.

The stroke which has been struck at Copenhagen is perhaps one of the most important in history.

But be that as it may, the manner in which the service has been executed is above all praise. The almost bloodless laurels of Admiral Gambier rank him with the first commanders that the country ever saw.

Most heartily I congratulate you upon his share in the glory and success of this great enterprise; in which his conduct, from the beginning, has been without a fault.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Your very humble and faithful servant,

G. CANNING.

ADMIRAL YOUNG TO LORD GAMBIER.*

My dear Gambier,

I do indeed most heartily rejoice at the complete success of your enterprise, to all the operations of which, on my country's account and on yours, I have looked with very anxious concern, and at times, from the various ill-founded reports we received, with some little apprehension of its failure. To have so anticipated, and at his own weapons so to have foiled *l'atroce*, is as delightful as it is advantageous; and the country is highly indebted to him, whoever he was, who first suggested the measure. To the pleasure we feel in this great event, it is no little addition that the success has been attended with so little loss. So large an army appeared from the first to be necessary; for the defences toward the sea have been represented as so strong that little hopes could be entertained of any material impression being made on them by ships, which would probably have been entirely destroyed in any attempt against them; and I comforted myself in the confidence of your not so exposing them. By a declaration published within these few days, it appears to be still uncertain what will be the ultimate fate of the ships, as peace is still offered to the Danes in

* Not dated, but the contents show it to have been written after the taking of Copenhagen.

terms which might admit of their being restored; but should that be done, a sufficient compensation will certainly be made to those who captured them. You will of course receive this Declaration, which is exceedingly good. I had no notion that the arsenal of Copenhagen could be so well stored, and I should be disposed to believe it must have been so as a depot for the French; but as you have converted it into a depot for us, the fuller it is, the better.

My brother speaks of a considerable quantity of crooked timber, which will be an acceptable article in our dock-yards. I did not know that Russia threatened to shut her ports against us; but if such ever was her intention, the loss of such a powerful co-operating fleet must make her cautious how she does so; for a very small force may now prevent one Russian ship, or one ship with Russian produce, from leaving the Baltic, which the great men in St. Petersburg will be very little inclined to suffer. What is doing at Lisbon, I do not know; but the newspapers tell us the fleet is fitting out and nearly ready for sea, for the purpose of carrying the royal family, and as many others as they can, to the Brazils, if Buonaparte should persist in some new demands he has made on them; but this may be only a newspaper story.

I am too far removed from the source of infor-

mation to have anything new to communicate; and here all things go on in the same quiet, dull round of one ship coming in, and another going out. At present our port* is almost empty. Accept my most sincere and cordial congratulations on the success which has crowned your exertions, and on the fortune and on the honours with which they will be rewarded; and believe me most faithfully yours, V. YOUNG.

LORD MULGRAVE TO MRS. GAMBIER.

Dear Madam,

His Majesty having been graciously pleased to confer the great and important honour of a peerage on Admiral Gambier, in reward of his distinguished service in the Baltic, I beg you to inform me (if you can) what title he will wish to bear.

In offering you my warmest congratulations on this high and distinguished mark of His Majesty's gracious approbation of the zeal and good conduct of the Admiral, I feel all the joy and satisfaction which a friendship and esteem of thirty years' duration must naturally excite. That you may both long enjoy the well-earned honours which the bounty of a gracious sovereign has bestowed is the sincere and earnest wish of, dear Madam, your most faithful servant. MULGRAVE.

* Plymouth, of which he was Port-Admiral.

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.]

Admiralty, September 16th, 1807.

Dear Gambier,

It gives me the most heartfelt satisfaction in conveying to you his Majesty's entire approbation of every part of your able and judicious management and distribution of the fleet under your command, to notify to you also His Majesty's gracious intention of advancing you to the Peerage, as a reward for your distinguished service in the Baltic. I have written to Mrs. Gambier to ask whether she can inform me what title you will wish to bear. The whole conduct of this most important transaction has been most masterly, and the result of the highest importance to the dearest interests of the country. His Majesty has also been pleased to express his gracious intention of conferring the dignity of a Baronet on Vice-Admiral Stanhope. Captain Sir George Collier has this day received the honour of knighthood. I lose no time in making these highly satisfactory communications to you; and I rather chose to defer the instructions and arrangements which must immediately follow, than to lose a day of the gratification which you, and those under your command, must feel in receiving the assurance of your sovereign's approbation. Your new dignity will deprive me of an able colleague and a friendly and judicious adviser; but

I can have no consideration that can enter into competition with the satisfaction which I feel at being the channel of communicating to you your well-earned honours.

Believe me, with great truth and regard,

Ever yours most sincerely,

MULGRAVE.

LORD CASTLEREAGH TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

Downing Street, September 19, 1807.

Sir,

You will have received officially, through the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, His Majesty's approbation of the judicious and decided conduct you have manifested during the whole period of your transactions, in carrying His Majesty's orders into execution, for preventing the Danish fleet and naval arsenal being placed in the hands of our enemies, and for that spirit of union and concert which prevailed between His Majesty's naval and military forces.

I am now to acknowledge your several letters from the 20th of August to the 7th inst., which have been laid before the King.

I am to express His Majesty's approbation of the measures you took for detaining, and afterwards sending to England, Danish vessels, and declaring the harbour of Zealand and the passage of the

Belt in a state of blockade. I am also to express the royal approbation of your declaring the port of Stralsund in a state of blockade, as well as the ports on the Island of Rugen, in case the Swedes shall be obliged to evacuate that island; but as this blockade is contingent, it is not thought expedient to publish it until it shall come into operation. I cannot resist from adding, upon this occasion, the real gratification and satisfaction it has afforded me that His Majesty was pleased to select you for conducting the naval department of this extensive and most important service, as I felt that, if it were possible promptly, humanely, and completely to effect it, an issue so favourable would be signally promoted by your conciliating talents and great professional experience and abilities.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
CASTLEREAGH.

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.]

Admiralty, September 19th, 1807.

Dear Gambier,

Subsequent to the capitulation for the surrender of the Danish fleet, you will have received the dispatches conveying the statements of the new view of our relations with the Court of Denmark, which the declaration of war by that Court had pro-

duced. I think it right, under these circumstances, again to express to you the entire approbation which is unanimously felt by His Majesty's Government of the whole of your conduct, as well as of that of Lord Cathcart, according to the instructions which you were acting under; and it is our intention that the capitulation should be carried into effect in the view and understanding of its conditions which you had in making it. Undoubtedly, the possession of the Island of Zealand would have been of the highest importance, as well for the protection and perhaps salvation of Sweden as for giving to this country so commanding an influence over the commerce, resources and naval existence of Russia, as would have tended to fix that powerful empire (in spite of the changeable disposition of its government) in a permanent system of union and co-operation with this country, for the mutual interests of the two empires and for the relief or deliverance of Europe.

The next object, and one which seems to be still open to us and within our reach, is to keep Denmark in a state of dependence on this country for all the resources of her trade and for the retention of any colonial possession; and if she cannot be prevailed upon to enjoy these in alliance with Great Britain, and under the direction of our naval power, we wish to provide effectually that under the influence and direction of France and Russia she

shall not become a formidable instrument of their enmity by a naval co-operation, exerted with that increased eagerness and animosity which the hard measure of self-preservation, to which we have been obliged to have recourse, must necessarily have excited both in the government and people of Denmark. If she cannot be brought to accept our alliance and receive our protection, the strong measure we have taken leaves us no alternative. We must, by every means at our disposal, deprive her of the power of contributing to promote those dangers to counteract which we have placed ourselves in the situation in which we stand with respect to Denmark. Whilst a hope (a faint one at best it must be) can remain that the Danish Government may be induced to concur in establishing a relation between the two countries, which may enable us to abstain from a further prosecution of hostile measures against Denmark—from the capture of her colonies, and the suppression of her trade—it is very desirable that, in carrying into full effect the great object which you have achieved, every precaution should be taken to create as little additional irritation as possible.

With this view, I should recommend you to avoid, if possible, setting fire to any vessels which are not fit to be brought to England. Such as will not bear the voyage might perhaps be carried so far from the sight of those on shore as to be sunk without observation; and any ships on the stocks

might if there be time, be taken to pieces, and the timbers embarked As the sight of destruction is always more grievous and mortifying than deprivation, it is to be wished that the Danes, who are prepared for the sight of their navy carried away from their arsenal, may not be distressed by the further mortification of seeing it destroyed, if that can be avoided; but they must be destroyed if they cannot be saved. The next object of importance to the joint possession of the island of Zealand by Great Britain and Sweden, is the preventing its occupation by a French army; and I am therefore anxious to learn your opinion with respect to the practicability of keeping up a flotilla blockade during the winter, with the assistance of the resources of the Swedish navy in ships and gunboats, and with the refuge of the Swedish harbours: and (if at all practicable) what British naval force in addition to that of Sweden would be required. If such an operation could be undertaken without too great an appropriation of force, and with a fair prospect of success, it might be the means of protecting Sweden during the winter from the dangers with which it would be most formidably menaced by the introduction of a numerous French army into Zealand. How far this operation might render it possible to retake Zealand in the spring with a combined British and Swedish force, must be determined by the opinion of the military

commanders, whose knowledge of the means of the island would render them competent judges; but this is a question not now necessarily to be decided.

In order to facilitate the navigation of the Danish ships to England, I have offered a bounty with pay and victuals during their employment, and a discharge in hand (to take effect when the Danish ships shall arrive in the ports where they are to be in ordinary) to the Greenland sailors, and other protected seamen, and I have great hopes from our beginning yesterday, that I shall be able in a few days to send you a large number of excellent seamen, who will diminish your detachments from your own ships of war, and will enable you, should it be possible to send any home for other service, to send them complete. At all events, I thought this temporary supply of good seamen would be acceptable, and might facilitate the equipment of the Danish ships; how far it is desirable to hasten the period of the evacuation of Zealand must depend upon considerations of weather; we shall know here in a few days whether any sort of negotiation is likely to take place with Denmark, and you will be kept informed of every event which should in any degree influence your conduct, or have relation to your operations.

Your suggestion with respect to promotion will

be immediately attended to, but I am at a loss to know what kind of compensation can be provided for Sir Hume Popham, although I have every disposition to pay attention to your wishes and to his claims; after the victory off Camperdown, Lord Duncan was created a peer, Admiral Onslow, the second in command, was made a baronet, and Captain Fairfax was knighted. In short, I wish you to give me, in a private letter, the names of some of those whom you wish to have promoted to post rank, stating the particular service, activity, or other ground of it, together with your views respecting Sir Hume Popham. I think two lieutenants should be made out of your own ship, and one out of each of the other flag-ships. I break off to go and speak to Mrs. Gambier and your brother. They are both very well.

Ever yours, most truly,

MULGRAVE.

P.S.—Is there any one of the small islands which could be occupied so as to afford a port of shelter to a flotilla in the Belt during the winter? You will perceive by the whole of this letter in how desultory and hurried a manner it is written, and you will also observe that a great anxiety respecting the fate of Sweden influences all the enquiries I am making. Upon looking into pre-

cedents I perceive that Peers have held seats at the Board of Admiralty.*

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private.] Admiralty, September 22nd, 1807.

My dear Gambier,

Lord Castlereagh will write to you so fully on the subject of Zealand that I will not confound you with a variety of expositions on that subject. By the information conveyed to you, it will appear how much of the future fate of Europe depends upon that island. The principal object of my writing, however, is for the purpose of again expressing how perfectly you and your colleague in the capitulation fulfilled the instructions under which you were acting. As I have hardly any older friends, or any that I esteem and value more than both of you, I have a particular pleasure in thinking and saying that you have done so.

Ever yours sincerely,

MULGRAVE.

LORD CATHCART TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private and secret.] Head-Quarters, September 23rd, 1807.

My dear Admiral,

I herewith send you a copy of Lord Castlereagh's

* Referring to his own letter already quoted, in which he expressed his regret at the prospect of losing Lord Gambier from the Admiralty Board in consequence of his being made a Peer.

letter dated 13th, and I will be ready to collate such answers as I can furnish. I suppose you either possess or can command information on the naval questions.

I have already ordered surveys to be me[illegible] the coast with reference to the land defences. Government seem not aware of the possibility of throwing troops in detachments into the southern islands, and of the increased land force which it would require to enable us to hold them. I had intended to go to-morrow morning into the country for a day or two, to look at the advanced posts, and to lay the foundation of such dispositions as the dispatches in answer to our's of the 8th of May require. I cannot therefore easily undertake to go on board of you, but if you cannot with perfect convenience come on shore this evening, order me a boat, and I will hold myself disengaged, so as to come off immediately to you.

I think the King of Sweden will be ready to accommodate.

His Majesty is come to fix his residence at Helsinborg.

Ever most sincerely yours,

CATHCART.

We shall be very short of provisions indeed, if the provisions which were in the transports loaded in the dock-yard have not been stored for the

army and carefully preserved, of which I have not as yet been able to procure any intelligence. This fund was always exclusively relied upon for our voyage. There do not exist, without that store, enough for ten days, besides what is in the remaining troop and store-ships, which are to carry troops.

CHAPTER V.

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

Admiralty, October 1st, 1807.

Dear Gambier,

I hope our protected volunteers* will be of essential service to you, there are about three thousand already sent off to assist in bringing home the Danish ships of war. Sir Arthur Wellesley (who arrived in town last night) expressed a doubt of your having sufficient tonnage of ships suited to carry cargoes of masts: I have, therefore, (without waiting for any report from you on the subject) sent this morning in every direction to endeavour to provide merchant ships, properly prepared for taking masts on board; and will send what I can get without delay, as I conclude, if they arrive by the time the capitulation takes effect by the evacuation of the arsenals, that you would still be able to load them afloat, if the masts shall have been previously

* The Greenland Fishermen referred to in a former letter.

floated out into the road. I have made a limited and partial promotion of rear-admirals of the blue only, and to stop with Commodore Keats, with the view of shewing a particularly marked attention to him and to Sir Samuel Hood (which I hope they will feel in that light), as well as to point the promotion more particularly to the important service to which it belongs.

Admiral —— waited the complete success of your enterprise to find out, or at least to express for the first time, that he has been extremely ill-treated by not having had the command entrusted to him; and he has thought proper to write me a most extraordinary and not very respectful letter, which has been followed by a correspodence which must for ever prevent any cordial co-operation and intercourse between that officer and me. If he holds his command at ——, it will be because he does not like to give up a comfortable station; though till the rewards of the service were coming forward, he was, as you will recollect, far from earnestly disposed to encounter the difficulties of an arduous and responsible situation. I shall communicate this extraordinary correspondence to you when we meet: but after his statement to you that his health was such as to put him often in doubt whether he could even retain his command at ——, I think I may call it the most extraordinary correspondence that ever

took place between an officer and a First Lord of the Admiralty. I only wait your title to address "your lordship." The whole country applauds the plan and conduct of the expedition.

Ever yours sincerely,

MULGRAVE.

LORD MULGRAVE TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

[Private and secret.]

Admiralty, October 3rd, 1807.

Dear Gambier,

In my last letter I omitted to mention to you how important it would be to the general management of the service that we should receive some line-of-battle ships fit for foreign service, from your fleet, as soon as you can spare them. You know the precarious state of Russian politics, and the necessity of a watchful attention to the Russian squadron in the Mediterranean, and how bare we are in that quarter, if Turks and Russians should be pressed into the service of France. Had Zealand been retainable under the capitulation, and tenable by a naval and military force, such as in conjunction with Sweden we could have assigned to that object, I have no doubt that Russia would have been completely kept in awe, and would have been at our disposal whenever the state of preparation of the Continental Powers might have enabled them to make a last and more concerted

struggle with effect; but if Zealand should fall into the hands of Bonaparte and, through Zealand, Sweden, and the weak point of the Russian dominions be menaced, the lesser evil to Russia will then be (in the estimation of the Court at least) hostility to England, and whenever such an impression shall be made at St. Petersburgh, the same calls of national policy, *the same duty of self-preservation which dictated the enterprise at Copenhagen, would require the interception of the Russian fleet now in the Mediterranean.* Lord Collingwood is not equal to that service, or to the detachment of a force which might, under suspicious circumstances, accompany the course, and control the operations of Admiral Siniavïn. It is determined at all events to keep an army (probably of 10,000 men) in Scania this winter, for the support of the King of Sweden against his enemies, of which, I believe, he has many at home as well as abroad; you will, therefore, I hope, turn your mind to the consideration of what proportion of floating force, and of what description, it will be desirable to leave, and possible to shelter, at Gottenburgh or elsewhere, for the protection of Sweden. The unsettled state of the American question will also require the detachment of an additional force to America, especially of frigates and smaller vessels.

Lord Gardner had also applied for more line-

of-battle ships and frigates, and Lord Collingwood is very earnest (as you have before known him) for more small vessels, which he states as absolutely necessary. The Barbary States are certainly not as favourable as we could wish them to be. Having stated all this to you, I know it is unnecessary to enter into further particulars. I trust our protected volunteers will facilitate this, and all your other arrangements.

Believe me ever, with great truth,

Yours ever sincerely,

MULGRAVE.

MR. PIERREPOINT TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

Helsingborg, October 3rd, 1807.

My dear Sir,

I send the lugger to the fleet, to return you official answers to the public letters I received from you at the moment of my departure from hence, as well as to try to recover from the 'Pigeon' schooner a packet of despatches with which her commander, Lieutenant Cox, was charged by my secretary as long ago as the day before yesterday. He was likewise the bearer of a considerable quantity of letters both for the army and navy (the contents of a Gottenburgh mail which comes now under my cover), and which, from circumstances, he must have delivered, as he left this place

on Thursday the 1st instant at one o'clock P.M., and was seen to arrive at the fleet about four the same day. I was at first inclined to attach some blame to Lieutenant Cox for this neglect; and in truth he does not seem to have used much activity in trying to deliver the despatches to me; but upon enquiry, I find the mistake rests in some measure with one of my young men, who instead of desiring Lieutenant Cox to deliver what he had for me on board the 'Prince of Wales' (as the only regular and proper channel), told him that I was to be found at the citadel, or on shore. But even in that case he had time sufficient to have enquired for me.

I understand from His Swedish Majesty that the messenger announced to me as to leave England on the 22nd, is delayed to the 25th (I think before that day my first letter after my late instructions will have arrived). Government, I understand, hold the language of keeping possession of Zealand if their proposals to the Prince Royal are not complied with, and which in substance I believe are, to restore the merchant vessels taken (not the fleet), and to restore such colonies as may have fallen into our hands, in consideration of a peace between the two powers, and the liberty on our part to occupy Cunenburg Castle, and to keep an armed force in Zealand till a general pacification.

Ministers seem to have been more satisfied with their last accounts from Russia than I think they will with what they have now to receive. My intelligence from Petersburgh is of the 17th instant. *Lord Grenville L. Gower had refused officially the Russian offer of mediation, in consequence of a refusal on the part of the Cabinet of St. Petersburgh to communicate the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit.* This has produced a considerable degree of effect; and defensive preparations were commencing with some activity. All the Finnish regiments, which had been drawn from their district, have received orders to return; and it is said a force of forty thousand men is to be collected on that frontier. The Guards have received private information that they shall probably be wanted shortly. The Comte de Romanhoff, lately Minister of Commerce, and naturally indisposed towards us, has succeeded M. de Budberg.

Pray have you despatched the vessels you talked of sending to Mr. Garlike? If not, might I request the delay of a day to enable me to avail myself of so secure an opportunity of writing, which may not otherwise present itself.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
With sincere truth and regard,
Your most faithful and obliged humble servant,
HENRY PIERREPOINT.

SIR ROBERT WILSON TO MR. PIERREPOINT.

Gothenburg, 8th October, 1807.

Dear Sir,

Being very anxious to reach St. Petersburgh as early as possible, I have landed at Gothenburg, and forwarded the accompanying dispatch to Lord Cathcart from Lord Castlereagh with a private letter of my own.

Mr. Bathurst was to sail with Mr. Merry, who, I calculate, embarked in the 'Prometheus' in the morning of the 4th. I sailed from Yarmouth on the evening of the 3rd.

Having read the despatches addressed to you, I can state the heads of their contents, which, in the case of any delay in Mr. Bathurst's arrival, may enable you to act consonant to the wishes of the British Government, in matters where time is of importance.

The despatches first notice the aid of troops proffered by Sweden as highly satisfactory; and had such aid been assured previous to the surrender of Copenhagen, the articles stipulating for the evacuation of Zealand would never have been permitted; but the strict execution now becomes necessary, if the Danish Government conform with exactness to all the other conditions; and the necessity of this scrupulous attention to the terms of the capitulation will assuredly be felt by the King of Sweden.

England wishes, however, to prevent French troops from occupying Zealand; and therefore, with the aid of the Swedish troops, will be disposed, as a last resource, to make a new descent on the island; and for this object, as well as for the protection of Sweden, ten thousand troops will be disembarked in Scania, for whose reception and subsistance immediate measures must be taken. But you are strongly to urge on the King of Sweden that an amicable arrangement with Denmark will be preferable to a continuation of hostilities, and persuade His Swedish Majesty to instruct his Minister at the Court of Denmark to exert his utmost influence to facilitate the success of Mr. Merry's mission, or the commencement of some negociation through any channel most agreeable to the Crown Prince. If Denmark negotiates and resumes her neutrality, the guarantee of Russia and Sweden will be necessary. The dispatch concludes with the King's congratulations on the improved state of His Swedish Majesty's health.

In my own letter to Lord Cathcart, I have stated to his lordship that His Majesty's Ministers would be glad if any private arrangement with General Peyman could extend the period of evacuation ten days, as in that time negotiations might be commenced which would secure Zealand from the necessity of receiving a French garrison or

being again occupied by the British to prevent the seizure of Copenhagen by their enemy.

The gain of these ten days would, in fact, enable the Emperor of Russia to transmit his sentiments to the Crown Prince and exert that influence which his Majesty's Ministers hope will induce Denmark to negotiate.

I regret much that I cannot, consistent with my duty, pass by Helsingborg to see you and pay my respects to the King of Sweden; but hope that I shall be enabled to have this gratification on my return.

I remain, &c.

R. WILSON.

MR. PIERREPOINT TO ADMIRAL GAMBIER.

Helsingborg, October 10th, 1807, 11 o'clock a.m.

My dear Sir,

I have this instant received the letter of which the enclosed* is a copy, from Sir Robert Wilson, with the accompanying memorandum, which he begged might be forwarded to you. Sir Robert's letter is all I yet know of the intentions of Government; but the King of Sweden heard something to the same effect, as long as three days ago, from his Minister in London.

Having seen several vessels go by lately from

* Vide the preceding letter.

England, it occurred to me that you and Lord Cathcart might have received instructions from Government respecting the landing of the troops in Sweden, and that Lord Cathcart might be waiting to receive information from me of the necessary permission having been forwarded. But as you will perceive by Sir R. Wilson's letter, I have as yet received no authority to make any proposal; however, it appears to me that the time is drawing so near, that none must be lost; and whenever I have Lord Cathcart's answer, I will endeavour to arrange the thing with the King of Sweden. In the meantime, Mr. Bathurst may possibly arrive here.

As Sir Arthur Wellesley must have arrived, Government will have been able to form their determination upon a full knowledge of all the circumstances of the case: but I fear the hope of the Emperor of Russia's intervention is now become a vain one.

In the event of the landing of a part of our troops in Sweden and the return of the rest to England, will you allow me to ask what proportion of our naval force is to be left in these seas? and when will that part of it sail, destined to return home (including the late Danish fleet, &c. ?).

As I am particularly anxious to lose no time in arranging the landing of the troops here, if it is to be carried into effect, I have begged Lord Cathcart

to give me a few lines in answer as soon as he can; and I have desired Mr. Major (with your permission) to endeavour to beat back here in the course of the night.

The accompanying bag contains the letters for the army and navy of the 29th by the Gottenburgh mail. It was impossible to send it yesterday, or the day before: no boat could come on shore. Believe me, my dear Sir, with sincere truth and regard,

Your most faithful and obliged
HENRY PIERREPOINT.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Helsingborg, October 18th, 1807.

My dear Sir,

I received this morning a despatch from Mr. Canning, enclosing one which I herewith transmit to Lord G. L. Gower, with directions to forward it in the speediest and safest manner. By the copy of it (which I enclose to you in confidence) you will perceive that its contents are too important for delay; and as I happen at this moment to have only one messenger with me, and as he is at present under orders for London, I would beg the favour of you to despatch a vessel with it to St. Petersburgh, with strict injunctions of care to the officer to whom it is delivered.

You will oblige me by communicating the copy

of the despatch to Mr. Merry, if he is still with you.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
With sincere truth and regard,
Your most faithful and obedient,
HENRY PIERREPOINT.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[Private.]

Helsingborg, October 19th, 1807. 11 o'clock a.m.

My dear Sir,

I am sorry not to send you an official answer to your public letter of the 17th as yet; and as I shall probably not be able to do so till this evening, if —(which would hardly be practicable now) the lugger's boat can then come on shore. I write this to explain the reason, in hopes that a shore boat may be prevailed upon to take it. It is simply this. I did not receive yours and Lord Cathcart's dispatches till late at night, Saturday. Yesterday I asked to see the king, but could not, as it was one of four Sundays in the year which are observed here with the strictest solemnity. My audience was to have taken place at eleven o'clock to-day, and at ten Mr. Bathurst arrived; therefore, you will naturally imagine, that to become master of my instructions, I desired to put off the audience till this evening; and as I shall send off the lugger with the result of it, I submit to you whether you

would think it advisable to sail till she comes. There is nothing, however, in my instructions that does not coincide with those to yourself and Lord Cathcart. It now, therefore, only remains to be seen whether the King of Sweden accepts the offer of the troops or not; for as to the naval force, as it remains for some time at all events, its mode of joint operation with that of Sweden may be settled hereafter.

11 o'clock, p.m.

The preceding part of this letter will have explained the cause of the first delay; and I have now to regret that my efforts to procure a shore boat, either to go to the fleet, or off to the lugger, were ineffectual in the present high surf. It would now also be impossible to attempt it; and I must wait till the morning. The King of Sweden still persists in refusing the troops, apprehending the scarcity of cattle, even if we could furnish bread and forage. Indeed I find the people here were so averse to their arrival, that they would not hear of the measure.

You will think my official letter rather undetermined; but I could not collect anything more from H. S. M. of his intentions. He hinted in plain terms at the necessity of the command being vested in his officers in the event of a joint operation, and talked of the general control of

the defence of the coast being given to Baron Toll; but as you may suppose, I could not feel authorized to construe the King's liberal offer into an intention of subjecting his naval officers to the control of those of Sweden, nor conceive that any good would result from their being placed under the command of a Swedish Field-Marshal.

Believe me ever, my dear Sir,

Your most faithful and obliged

HENRY PIERREPOINT.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[Private.] Helsingborg, October 19th, 1807.

My dear Sir,

I trouble you with an additional private letter upon a subject of form, which, at this Court (naturally jealous of not being treated with every attention due to a more powerful one), it may not be unimportant to attend to. I find (for no word has been openly said to me) that the Swedes talk a good deal of no attention having been paid to their Sovereign by the King's Commanders-in-chief; and I would therefore submit to you whether, in addition to your civil and proper intention of paying your personal respects to H. S. M. as you go by, you would not order all the ships and vessels to give a royal salute, and to come as near the Swedish shore as safety and convenience will permit. The fact really is, that we sail through

the King of Sweden's own seas; and as he is here himself, and will most probably be on the beach to see the fleet pass, I think you will agree with me that an attention of this kind is nearly necessary, and it certainly would have the effect of setting matters straight. If the fleet anchored here, the King might expect to be asked to visit the 'Prince of Wales;' but might not this be avoided (in the case especially of a fair and leading wind) if you were, in a fast sailing frigate, to precede the fleet two or three hours, and take the weather as an excuse for not stopping and for the necessity of rejoining the fleet without loss of time? This, with the salute, would do admirably well.

Forgive me, my dear Sir, for submitting what I think upon this subject to your better judgment. You will do me the justice to believe that I can have no other wish than that we should do exactly what may be thought right and expedient.

Ever, with sincere truth and regard,

Your most obliged servant,

HENRY PIERREPOINT.

Before the ships fire, might it not be as well to send forward to apprize the Governor of Cronenberg Castle of the reason of their doing so? Pray let me know when you think you are likely to arrive here. I hope you will allow me to keep the lugger as long as I remain on the coast and we

have a squadron in the Sound, to keep up communications.

"Early in October the British fleet and army returned to England, bringing with them their magnificent prize, consisting of eighteen ships of the line in excellent condition, fifteen frigates, six brigs, and twenty-five gun-boats, besides two sail of the line, and three frigates, which had been destroyed, as not worth the removal."* "Including the cannon placed on the praams and floating batteries which were brought away, the artillery taken amounted to 3,500 pieces. The prize money due to the troops engaged was estimated by Admiral Lord Gambier at £960,000."†

"There is no example in modern times of such an armament having been at once made prize and brought home by any power. At Trafalgar, only four ships of the twenty taken were brought to the British harbours; at La Hogue, none of the prizes were saved, out of eighteen taken; and at Toulon in 1793, no more than three sail of the line, and three frigates, were brought away out of the vast fleet there committed to the flames."‡

"Napoleon felt the Copenhagen blow most keenly, the more so as it was achieved by a vigour

* Alison's "History of Europe," vide also Admiral Gambier's Despatch. † Ibid. vol. vi., p. 472.

† Alison's "History of Europe," vol. vi., p. 475.

and decision in the English councils to which they had long been strangers, and which, in that instance, even surpassed his own promptitude. 'The success of the attack on Copenhagen,' says Fouché, 'was the first derangement of the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit, in virtue of which the navy of Denmark was to have been put at the disposal of France. Since the catastrophe of Paul, I had never seen Napoleon in such a transport of rage. That which struck him most in this vigorous *coup-de-main* was the promptitude and resolution of the English Ministers.'"*

It appears that the Cabinet of St. Petersburgh was secretly gratified at the success of the English on this occasion. "An English officer of literary celebrity, probably Sir Robert Wilson [whose letter to Mr. Pierrepoint has been already inserted], was employed by Alexander, or those who were supposed to share his most secret councils, to convey to the British Ministry the Emperor's expressions of the secret satisfaction which his Imperial Majesty felt at the skill and dexterity which Britain had displayed in anticipating and preventing the purposes of France by her attack upon Copenhagen."†

* "Alison's History of Europe," vol. vi., p. 483. "Mémoires de Fouché," vol. ii., p. 137.

† Ibid. Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER VI.

HANNAH MORE TO LORD GAMBIER.

Barley Wood, November 14th, 1807.

My dear Lord,

Among the many congratulations which you are receiving on your brilliant success and your safe return, I cannot forbear adding my voice to the number, as few of your friends have been more anxious for your fame, or sent up more prayers for the event. I cannot but think that, in these days of lamentable irreligion, it augurs well for our country when rulers select good men for great public situations. It has pleased God eminently to bless the undertakings of Lord Barham and yourself; and I hope religion will no longer appear so formidable a thing to our great men, when they see that, so far from disqualifying persons from executing high and perilous offices properly, it inspires them with greater vigour and superior energy. I, as well as every other unprejudiced person, was delighted with the moderation and good feeling exhibited in your proclamations. I

hope you are returned without injury to your health, and that you found your good and anxious lady well. I beg to be kindly remembered to her. It has pleased God to visit me with an illness which seems sent to contradict the opinion that what is long cannot be violent. At the end of seventeen months I have not yet been able to walk round my plantation, although the most dangerous symptoms are subsided.

Patty, who is obliged to work double tides to supply my lack of service, desires her kind respects. This is too long a letter for one so engaged to receive; but I know you will forgive the zeal of an old attached friend. I am ever,

My dear Lord, your faithful servant,

H. More.

BISHOP PORTEUS TO LORD GAMBIER.

Fulham, December 3rd, 1807.

My Lord,

Had it not been for illness, for absence at Bristol, and, after my return from thence, an unusual accumulation of business, you would long since have received mine and Mrs. Porteus' most sincere congratulations on your wise and successful conduct and the triumphant termination of one of the most important and delicate commissions that has perhaps been ever executed by any naval commander. We now, however, beg leave to offer

our cordial felicitations on this occasion, which shows how much you have profited by the excellent school (that of Lord Barham) in which you have been educated, and how perfectly consistent true valour and magnanimity are with genuine piety and the strictest purity of manners. I am, with the truest regard and esteem,

Your Lordship's most faithful and obedient servant,

B. LONDON.

This letter concludes those on the subject of Copenhagen; but the debates thereupon in the beginning of 1808 furnish forth a few passages that claim admission in respect of their quaintness.*

On the one side of the House it was very broadly hinted that the Treaty of Tilsit contained no secret articles at all; whilst on the other, the measures taken by Ministers relative to Denmark were as broadly defended; but either ministerial etiquette or some stronger, let us hope worthier, motive kept back the plain fact—that Lord Granville Leveson Gower had, in the previous September, *officially refused Russian mediation, because the Russian Government had refused to communicate to him the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit.*

In the House of Commons—Mr. Windham thought that Lord Cathcart could not feel proud of

* Vide Debates.

the honours lately conferred upon him, because "the word 'Copenhagen' signified literally 'a harbour of merchants' "—nor could Lord Gambier value a peerage given him on that occasion, because he had distinguished himself brilliantly as a captain in the year 1794.

Mr. Windham further stated his conviction that Ministers, finding they had got money in their pockets, resolved on spending it, and "not knowing what to do with the army they had collected, they said, after some reflection "God bless us! let us go and attack the Danish fleet!"

Whereas Mr. Fuller was only sorry that Ministers had not "seized every bird that hovered about the transactions of Tilsit;" and concluded by saying, that "whatever the other side of the House might say about Crown Princes or half-crown Princes, we ought to believe our own Ministers."

Mr. Whitbread very emphatically stated more than once, that he did not believe in Ministers' statements: and Mr. Windham was convinced that the captured ships would be rotten when the feeling of resentment on the part of the Danes would be as strong as ever—whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, that the captured ships would certainly be rotten at some time or other, but not in the ensuing spring—not at a period when they might be employed in conveying French troops to Ireland, or in excluding us from the Baltic.

The thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to the commanders-in-chief, and the officers &c., &c., under their command—in the Lords without a division—in the Commons, by a majority of 100 to 19.

The thanks of the House of Lords were given to Lord Gambier as follows—and those of the House of Commons a few days before and in the same words.

Die Jovis, 28 January, 1808.

Resolved, by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, that the thanks of this House be given to Admiral the Right Honourable Lord Gambier for the distinguished ability and promptitude displayed in the judicious distribution of His Majesty's fleet under his command in the Baltic, by which all succours were cut off from the island of Zealand, and the uninterrupted operations of the army at the siege of Copenhagen were secured; and for his zealous and cordial co-operation with the land forces during that important service, after every means of negotiation had been exhausted; and also for the judgment and indefatigable activity manifested by him in equipping the Danish army for sea, and effecting the embarkation and removal of the naval stores from the arsenal of Copenhagen.

Ordered that the Lord Chancellor do give his

Lordship the same when he is in his place in the House.

GEORGE ROSE, Clerk of Parliament.

Lord Gambier returned thanks in the following words:

My Lords.—The profession in which I have been bred is by no means calculated to qualify me to deliver my sentiments before such an assembly as your Lordships; I therefore hope for your indulgence, and that you will make that allowance for my deficiency that I stand in need of.

My Lords, the service which was committed to the charge of my noble colleague and myself required great moderation and humanity in the execution of it; and it was our earnest endeavour to execute both; but unhappily the Danes made that unavailing resistance to us which drove us to measures very contrary to our inclinations. For the loss of the lives and the blood that was shed the Danish Government alone has to answer.

My Lords, the flag-officers and other officers, with the seamen and marines under my command, evinced the greatest alacrity and zeal in the service; and I am sure that, when occasion shall require, they will manifest equal bravery.

Having been so happy as to obtain the Royal approbation, that of your Lordships, of the other House of Parliament, and I trust of the

nation at large, I beg leave to say that I attribute our success to the favour of Divine Providence, which has been so often manifested to this country in the times of difficulty and distress, and which has rescued us from dangers that no other power could effect.

The honour that your Lordships have conferred upon me has made the deepest and most lasting sense of it upon my mind. I return your Lordships my most humble thanks first; and to you, my Lord Chancellor, I return my best thanks for the obliging manner in which you have been pleased to convey the sense of the House to me.

CHAPTER VII.

The spring of the year 1809 brings us to a subject which, fifty years ago, was worn yet more threadbare than that of Copenhagen—viz, the operations in Basque Roads under Lord Gambier. Hoping to steer between discursiveness and obscurity, I propose giving a *résumé* of the Court-Martial;* but, in so doing, it may be as well to remind the reader of one or two facts with their dates.

On the 1st of March, 1809, Lord Gambier then commanding the Channel fleet, received a very prolix and ill-written letter† from the Admiralty, ordering him to put to sea and proceed off Rochefort. The letter contains the most complicated directions that ever were penned for the purpose of giving an Admiral responsibility without free agency—the only clear directions being contained in a *refrain* that comes in at the

* Minutes of a Court-Martial on Admiral Lord Gambier taken in short-hand by Mr. W. B. Gurney.

† Ibid, p. 17.

end of each sentence, to the effect, that under every possible contingency he is to return to Causand Bay for further orders.

On the 11th of March, Lord Gambier wrote to Lord Mulgrave suggesting an attack by fire-ships,* and on the 19th, the secretary to the Admiralty wrote a dispatch containing an order to the same effect,† which Lord Gambier received on the 26th. Whether the latter was sent after the arrival of the former, and whether, if so, it was written *propter hoc*—is a question on which there seems at this time to be no evidence, nor is it at all material to the point at issue.

On the 25th,‡ another official letter informed Lord Gambier that the Admiralty had selected Captain Lord Cochrane "for the purpose of conducting, under his lordship's directions, the fire-ships to be employed in the projected attack of the enemy's squadron off the Isle d'Aix."

By doing which at the *eleventh hour*, the Lords of the Admiralty in their wisdom placed the Commander-in-chief and Lord Cochrane respectively in invidious positions, produced heart-

* "The enemy's ships lie very much exposed to the operation of fire-ships. It is a horrible mode of warfare, and the attempt very hazardous, if not desperate; if you mean to do anything of the kind, it should be done with secrecy and quickly," &c. *Minutes, p.* 115. *Lord Gambier's Despatch of March* 11*th.*

† Minutes, p. 116.

‡ Ibid, p. 22.

burnings among some of the senior officers of the fleet, who having previously volunteered for the above service, and supposing Lord Gambier to have applied for Lord Cochrane,* considered themselves aggrieved by the former†—caused two courts-martial, and cost a rear-admiral his commission.‡

Lord Cochrane joined the squadron in Basques Roads on the 3rd of April, delivering in person the Admiralty despatch of the 25th of March.

On the evening of the 11th the French fleet

* "He [Admiral Harvey] told me that the person [Lord Cochrane) being sent to perform the intended service was certainly the suggestion of the Commander-in-chief."—*Captain Bedford's Evidence on Admiral Harvey's Court-Martial.*

† "Every captain was my senior, and the moment my plans were made known, all regarded me as an interloper sent to take credit from those to whom it was now considered legitimately to belong."—"*Autobiography of a Seaman.*" *vol. i, p.* 355. "Strange as it may appear, almost the only persons who treated me with consideration were Lord Gambier, his second in command (Admiral Stopford), and his Flag-Captain, Sir Harry Neale. For this urbanity, Lord Gambier had to incur the bitter sarcasm of the fleet, &c., &c." *Ibid, vol. i, p.* 362.

‡ Admiral Harvey—for grossly insubordinate language on board the 'Caledonia,' in consequence of not having been appointed to command the fire-ships. He was afterwards re-instated for previous gallantry at Trafalgar.

"On Lord Gambier informing him that the Board had fixed upon me for the purpose, he [Admiral Harvey] said, "He did not care—if he were passed by, and Lord Cochrane or any other junior officer appointed in his preference, he would immediately strike his flag and resign his commission."—"*Autobiography of a Seaman,*" *vol i. p.* 366. *Vide also* "*Minutes of the Court-Martial on Admiral Harvey.*"

in Aix Roads was attacked by fire-ships under the charge of Lord Cochrane, who preceded them on board the first of three explosion vessels—the result, as visible next morning from the fleet, being, that the enemy's ships cut their cables, and, all but two, finally ran ashore. At 5.48* next morning the 'Impérieuse,†' being an advanced frigate, signalled to the 'Caledonia:‡' "Half the fleet can destroy the enemy, seven on shore." At 6 15.§ Lord Gambier unmoored the fleet by signal, and, after giving verbal instructions‖ to the respective captains, stood in with the fleet towards Aix Roads. About eleven he anchored three miles from the Fort on the Isle d'Aix.¶ At 2 p.m., and subsequently, he sent in various vessels, including four line-of-battle ships, to attack the French fleet.**

Four French ships†† were destroyed on that day.‡‡ On the morning of the 13th, the line-of-battle ships were ordered out of Aix Roads by the

* Vide Log of the 'Caledonia.' Also "Minutes of the Court-Martial," pp. 39, 125, 171, 172, 182.

† Lord Cochrane's ship—a 38 gun frigate.

‡ Lord Gambier's flag-ship.

§ Log of the 'Caledonia,' &c.

‖ Minutes, p. 87, &c.

¶ Minutes, page 86.

** Evidence of their respective captains. Vide Minutes.

†† Ville de Varsovie, 80; Aquilon, 74; Tonnerre, 74; Calcutta, 56.

‡‡ Minutes—James' Naval History—Autobiography of a Seaman.

Rear-Admiral* (Stopford). On the 14th, Lord Cochrane was ordered out by Lord Gambier, for the purpose of conveying the Captain of the fleet (Sir Harry Neale) to England† with the despatches.‡

The 'Impérieuse' accordingly sailed for England on the morning of the 15th.§

On the 29th the Commander-in-chief returned home.

In May, Lord Cochrane warned Lord Mulgrave,‖ that in the event of the vote of thanks being moved, he should, as Member for Westminster, object thereto, so far as regarded the Commander-in-chief. The vote of thanks being therefore suspended,¶ Lord Gambier demanded a court-martial in the following letter:—**

London, May 30th, 1809.

Sir,

Having, in my letter of the 10th instant, detailed the whole of the proceedings of the fleet under my command, in the attack on the enemy in

* Minutes, p. 80, 161, &c.

† Minutes, Naval History, Autobiography of a Seaman.

‡ "I have charged Sir Harry Neale with this despatch by the 'Impérieuse;' and I beg leave to refer their Lordships to him, as also to Lord Cochrane, for any further particulars of which they may wish to be informed."—*Lord Gambier's Despatch of April 14th.*

§ Naval History, "Autobiography," Minutes, &c.

‖ Minutes, p. 15, 16, also "Autobiography," p. 403.

¶ Minutes, p. 16.

** Ibid, p. 111.

the Road of Aix, I had flattered myself that I should have received some signification of an approbation of my conduct, and have had the gratifying task of conveying to the officers and men under my command the estimation in which the gallantry and discipline displayed by them upon that occasion, was held by His Majesty and their country.

Understanding, however, that there are some doubts whether the fleet is to be so honoured, and feeling that even a doubt upon such a subject cannot be entertained consistently with my reputation as Commander-in-chief, I request that you will be pleased to move the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to direct a court-martial to be assembled as early as possible, for the purpose of enquiring into my conduct as Commander-in-chief, and all the transactions relative to the fleet under my command, from the 17th of March last, when the fleet anchored in Basques Roads, to the time of her quitting that anchorage for England, on the 29th ultimo. I have the honour to be, &c., &c.

J. GAMBIER.

In consequence of which demand, a court-martial assembled on board the 'Gladiator,' in Portsmouth harbour, July 26th, the charge being made out as follows:* "That the said Admiral," &c., &c., "on

* Minutes, p. 2.

the 12th of April, the enemy's ships being then on shore, and the signal having been made that they could be destroyed, did, for a considerable time, neglect or delay taking effectual means for destroying them." The main question at issue was—whether, taking into consideration the depth of water, and the state of the wind and tide on the 12th of April, Lord Gambier could, or could not, without wanton sacrifice of His Majesty's ships, have sent in the line-of-battle ships sooner than he did—whether, in short, the honour and interests of the country had or had not been best consulted by the line of conduct he had pursued on that occasion.

My space is limited, under penalty of a yet narrower limitation of the reader's patience. I must therefore condense the evidence to the extremest verge of perspicuity; referring the reader to the printed Minutes of the Court-Martial for further information.

But inasmuch as it is manifestly unjust to give a published account of any transaction without referring to every available authority concerning it, I shall, from all such authorities, make such extracts as shall bear upon the subject; in order that the reader may judge how far they agree among themselves, and what inferences result from considering them separately, comparatively, and in combination.

Lord Dundonald says, in his "Autobiography of a Seaman:"*—"Early in the year [1809], Lord Gambier had been appointed to blockade the French fleet at Brest. Towards the end of February, however, they contrived to elude his vigilance, and got out without leaving a trace of the direction taken. Despatching Admiral Duckworth in pursuit, his Lordship returned to Plymouth."

As this account, though strictly correct, as far as it goes, would, from its incompleteness, lead to incorrect inferences prejudicial to Lord Gambier, fair play requires that the vacant spaces should be filled up—when the facts stand thus:—

Lord Gambier was, at the period stated by Lord Dundonald, employed with a squadron of his (the Channel) Fleet, in blockading the French fleet at Brest. The squadron being driven from its station by tempestuous weather,† the French fleet *comprehended its epoch* and escaped. Upon this, Lord Gambier detached Sir John Duckworth, with eight sail of the line and a frigate, in pursuit; and much to his own personal annoyance, returned to Causand Bay for further orders, in obedience to his instructions from the Admiralty.

The next question is the employment of fire-ships. Lord Dundonald's account‡ would lead the reader

* Vol. i, p. 339.

† Vide log of the 'Caledonia.'

‡ Autobiography of a Seaman, vol. i., pp. 341—9.

to infer that Lord Gambier shirked responsibility in general, and that of employing fire-ships in particular. In reference to the Admiralty letter of March 19th and that of Lord Gambier, of March 26th (already mentioned) he says:

"Lord Gambier's reply to this intimation, that on the receipt of the above mentioned appliances he would be expected to attack the French squadron, was, that 'if the Board deemed an attack practicable, he would obey any orders with which they might honour him, however great might be the loss of men and ships;' a plain declaration that he still declined to take upon himself the responsibility of attack"

A very important item for consideration is here omitted; namely, the average amount of discretional power enjoyed by Admirals employed in operations near home. But the question arising from the above mentioned despatches is not one of responsibility at all. Lord Gambier *could not decline a responsibility which had been taken from him by a distinct order.* Mr Pole's despatch of the 19th contains an order to Lord Gambier to employ fire-ships; and Lord Gambier's despatch of the 26th is an assent thereto.*

Lord Dundonald's account confuses the attack

* In obedience to their Lordships' directions to me contained in your letter of the 19th inst. etc.—*Lord Gambier's Despatch of March 26th.*

by fire-ships with that by the fleet; and the reader will perceive from the subjoined extracts, that the sentence quoted from Lord Gambier's despatch refers to sending in line-of-battle ships to attack the enemy, and not to the question of fire-ships at all.

From Mr. Pole's Despatch of the 19th.

"I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to acquaint your Lordship that they have ordered twelve transports to be fitted as fire-ships, and to proceed and join you off Rochfort.

. . . . . .

"You are to man the fireships with volunteers from the fleet &c., &c."*

From Lord Gambier's Despatch of the 26th.

".... I beg leave to add that if their Lordships are of opinion that an attack on the enemy's ships by *those of the fleet* under my command be practicable, I am ready to obey any orders with which they may honour me, however great might be the loss of men and ships."†

* Vide Minutes, p. 19, &c. This despatch is also given in the Autobiography, p. 348—9. But the postscript and the above paragraph beginning, "You are to man the fire-ships," etc., *are there omitted.*

† Minutes, p. 19.

The following sentences do not seem to be quite intelligible when placed in juxtaposition.

Lord Dundonald says in his Account: "Lord Gambier, in his first despatch to the Admiralty, gave me credit for everything but the success of my plan, and in his second despatch omitted my name altogether, as having had anything to do with either planning or executing it."—(Autobiography of a Seaman. vol. i, p. 350.)

He [Lord Cochrane] says in his Evidence on the Court-Martial: "I had charge of the fire-ships which had failed of their expected purpose."—Minutes p. 48)

Lord Gambier's says in his *second* despatch: "I furnished them [the commanders of fire-vessels] with full instructions for their proceedings in the attack, *according to Lord Cochrane's plan.*"—Vide Minutes, pp. 11. and 12.)

The attack by fire-ships, which Lord Cochrane thus declared to have failed, being part of that plan, it is difficult to imagine how the Commander-in-chief could give him credit for its success; but from the following passage in the "first despatch," it appears that Lord Gambier gave him credit for as much success as gallantry and professional

talent could have achieved under the circumstances.

"The arrangement of the fire-vessels, placed under the direction of Captain the Right Honorable Lord Cochrane, was made, as fully as the state of the weather would admit, *according to his Lordship's plan*, on the evening of the 11th instant.... but owing to the darkness of the night, several mistook their course and failed .... At twenty minutes past two p.m. [on the 12th] Lord Cochrane advanced in the 'Impérieuse,' with his accustomed gallantry and spirit, and opened a well-directed fire upon the 'Calcutta,' which struck her colours to the 'Impérieuse.' .... I cannot speak in sufficient terms of admiration and applause of the vigorous and gallant attack made by Lord Cochrane upon the French line-of-battle ships which were on shore, as well as his judicious manner of approaching them, and placing his ship in a position most advantageous to annoy the enemy and preserve his own ship; which could not be exceeded by any feat of valour hitherto achieved by the British navy, ... and I beg leave to refer their lordships to him [Sir Harry Neale], and also to Lord Cochrane, for any further particulars of which they may wish to be informed."

Also in his Defence, Lord Gambier says, "Although not one of the enemy's ships was actually destroyed by means of the fire-ships, yet the terror excited by their approach induced the enemy to

cut their cables, and exposed them by their running aground to the attack that ensued.*

WORKS ON THE BOYART.

The next question demanding the reader's attention is as follows:

"On the 11th [of March]," says Lord Dundonald,† "Lord Gambier had informed the Board of Admiralty—as to my own personal knowledge was the fact—that the advanced work on the Isle d'Aix was no obstacle to bombardment; now," says his lordship,‡ "the ships attacking would, from the fire of this fort, be exposed to be raked by red-hot shot, and if disabled in their masts, must be destroyed." In the former letter, his Lordship stated the fort was 'injured in its foundations, and in no state of progress;' it is now characterized as 'the strong works on the Isle d'Aix.'

If the reader will look at pages 342 and 351 of the Autobiography of a Seaman§ he will see Lord Gambier's despatches of March 11th and 26th given at length; and he will also see that Lord Dundonald has, in his reference to the former, substituted the words "*on the Isle d'Aix*" for "*between* the isles of Aix and *Oléron*."

* Minutes, p. 125.

† "Autobiography of a Seaman," vol. i. p. 352.

‡ Lord Gambier's Despatch of the 26th March.

§ Also at p. 115 and 119 of the Minutes.

Here are the two passages,

Lord Gambier says in his Despatch of March 11th:* "The advanced work between the Isles of Aix and Oléron which I mentioned in my last letters, I find was injured in its foundations, and is in no state of progress."

Lord Gambier says in his Despatch of March 26th.† "Such ships, therefore, as might attack the enemy, would be exposed to be raked by the red hot shot &c., from the island..... The enemy have taken their position, apparently with the view not only to be protected by the strong works on the Isle of Aix, &c."

The "advanced work" alluded to in the first quotation, was on the Boyart which, as the reader will see by referring to any chart of the locality, is *between* the Isles of Aix and Oléron. Lord Gambier refers to it in his Defence, as follows:—"Observing that the enemy were resuming their works on the Boyart shoal, with the view of affording to their fleet in Aix Roads additional protection, I sent in the 'Amelia' and 'Conflict' on the 1st of April to disperse the people employed on these works, which service they effected." This circumstance is also mentioned in an intercepted letter, written by a French officer on board the 'Océan,' and admiral Bickerton, then one of the Lords of the Admi-

* Minutes, p. 115, Autobiography, p. 352.

† Minutes, p. 115, Autobiography, 352.

ralty, referred to the fort on the Boyart in a letter to Lord Gambier, written in March.

The following passages also demand the reader's comparison:

Lord Dundonald says in his Account: "That there was really little damage to be feared from these fortifications, either to ships or bombs, was afterwards corroborated by the fact that when a partial attack only was reluctantly made, neither suffered from their fire."*

Admiral Stopford says in his Evidence: .... "Also from the conversation I had with the Commander-in-chief, and *witnessing his impatience and disappointment at circumstances not allowing him to go in with the fleet*, &c., &c., &c."—Minutes p. 87.

And Captain Kerr says in his Evidence on the Court-martial: "The bowsprit [of the Revenge] was severely wounded, great part of the running rigging and sail cut to pieces, five planks of the quarter-deck cut through, the quarter-deck beams entirely carried away, and a number of shots in different parts of the hull. Three men killed and fifteen wounded, two of whom afterwards died..... the damage in the hull and the killed and wounded were from the batteries on the Isle d'Aix entirely."†

* Autobiography of a Seaman, vol. i. p. 352.

† Minutes, p. 218, 219.

DISTANCE OF THE FLEET FROM THE ISLE D'AIX.

The following figures rebel against all known rules of arithmetic:

Lord Dundonald states that Lord Gambier "never was nearer than nine miles to the scene of action;"* but that after 11 o'clock a.m. on the 12th of April, "he approached within seven or eight miles of the grounded ships, and anchored about three and a half miles from the Isle of Aix, *i.e.* just out of range."† Now if he was seven or eight miles from the furthest hostile ships, and three and a half from the batteries on the Isle d'Aix, the conclusion that he never was nearer to the scene of action than nine miles is puzzling.

Lord Cochrane said in his Evidence on the Court-Martial;‡ that on the night of the 4th, when the attack by fire-ships was made, the British fleet was distant from the French between eight and nine miles:§ at page 399 of the 'Autobiography,' he states that Lord Gambier was, on the same night,

* Autobiography, p. 350.

† Ibid, p 284.

‡ Minutes, p. 38.

§ "To the best of my judgment the British fleet was [April 11th] distant from the French, between eight and nine miles, I think nine. . . The position chosen by the Commander-in-chief was a very good one for blockading the enemy, and for observing any material movements of their squadron."—*Lord Cochrane's evidence on the Court-Martial. Minutes, p.* 38.

"more than a dozen miles from the scene of action;" and at page 380 that "he was with the fleet, fourteen miles distant."* But this last figure must surely be misprinted; as Lord Gambier would then have been outside the Chasseron light-house, and in the Bay of Biscay.

The following extract from the log of the 'Caledonia,' Lord Gambier's flag-ship, now before me, will show her exact position, &c., taken trigonometrically and by cross-bearings, when she first anchored in Basque Roads on the 17th of March; in which position she remained until she moved about three miles nearer to the Citadel on the Isle d'Aix on the 12th of April.

"Friday, March 17, 1809, 3.30 P.M. moored with a cable each way, St. Mary's Church N. ½ E.
Citadel of Isle d'Aix . . . S. by E. ⅝ E.
Chasseron Tower . . . W. ¾ N.
Rochelle Spire . . . . E. by N. ½ N.
Ars Spire . . . . N.N.W, ½ W.

"Enemies fleet of eleven sail of the line and four frigates S.E. six miles."

* Lord Dundonald says, p. 382, that the British fleet was from twelve to fourteen miles from the stranded enemy's ships, but the clear inference from p. 380 is, that it was fourteen miles from the *scene of action*. The words are as follows: "Had the Commander-in-chief witnessed this scene, he would, &c. . . In place of becoming the agressors, the only care of the enemy was how to get out of the way. . . Unfortunately the Commander-in-chief was with the fleet, fourteen miles distant."

Lord Dundonald insists* much on the facility of so placing the British ships as to bring those of the enemy between the attacking force and the guns on the Isle d'Aix; and, to confirm his statement, subpœnas the following words from Lord Gambier's despatch of March 26th.

"The most distant ships of their two lines are within point-blank shot of the Isle d'Aix."

But inasmuch as the required conclusion will not result therefrom, unless it be conceded that the line-of-battle ships could have been placed in the required positions, which Lord Gambier denies, an explanatory superstructure is added, and the sentence made roundly conclusive by a bold introduction of the writer's own opinion. Here is the argument in its triplicity:

1.—Lord Gambier does not appear to have taken this view, but he completely proved its soundness by stating that the enemy's ships lay within point blank shot of their own works, = Original sentence found insufficient.

2.—So as to expose them to the fire of their own works on Aix, if these fired at all, = Explanatory superstructure.

* Autobiography, vol. i. p. 344 and 352—53.

3.—Whilst *my* previous knowledge of the anchorage made it a matter of certainty to me that it was not difficult for the British fleet to place the enemy in such a position.

Bold introduction of the writer's own opinion.

Lord Gambier's "view"—that it was not possible so to place the British ships as to bring the French ships between their own guns and the enemy—was urged on the Court-Martial by an overwhelming weight of evidence; but as that part of the evidence refers to the 12th, we must postpone the consideration of it.

Strangely enough, Mr. James makes this unhappy fragment of a despatch serve quite a different purpose, viz. that of invalidating Lord Gambier's defence; and this purpose he effects, much to his own apparent satisfaction, by means of transferring it from the despatch *to* the Defence. He says:

"Lord Gambier's assertion, at his trial, that the most distant French ships of the two lines were within point blank shot of the works on the Isle d'Aix, we, by giving the exact distance, have shewn it to be incorrect."*

Lord Gambier did *not* assert it on his trial; nor did he directly or indirectly rest any part of his defence upon such a plea. The despatch in

* James's Naval History, vol. v. p. 126.

which it was contained was read, among other necessary documents, in his defence; but, whatever might have been the relative positions of the French ships on or before the evening of the 11th, those ships had moved from those positions before the morning of the 12th, the day for whose occurrences Lord Gambier had to justify himself before the Court-Martial: and therefore he not only did not, but *could not* assert this plea in justification of his conduct on that occasion.

Having compared these preliminary despatches with the Protean meanings which have been deduced from them, we pass on to the subsequent events in order of time; the first date in order being the 3rd of April, the day on which Lord Cochrane arrived in Basque Roads and reported himself to the Commander-in-chief.

As immediately consequent upon which, the remarks of Admiral Harvey on board the 'Caledonia' first claim our notice. I could well wish to omit this unfavourable passage in the career of a brave officer, who spoke in the unreasoning heat of an ungovernable temper, and under the mistaken conviction of having been wronged by the Commander-in-chief;* but as Lord Dundonald has raked

* "He [Admiral Harvey] told me that the person [Lord Cochrane] being sent to perform the intended service was certainly the suggestion of the Commander-in-chief."—*Captain Bedford's Evidence on Admiral Harvey's Court-Martial.*

it up after the lapse of half a century, it is necessary to refer to it. Whether Admiral Harvey's ebullition of anger for a supposed slight can with justice be brought forward after fifty-one years, as inferential evidence against Lord Gambier, and whether a published record of what he said when blinded by rage, is a graceful tribute to his memory by a brother officer, are questions which I leave to the reader's decision. I have to notice only one sentence; after which I shall gladly turn from so painful a contemplation.

The sentence* is this: "I do not cheat old women out of their estates, &c."

By the above quoted words the reader may fairly estimate the credibility of the rest. Lord Gambier never had any estate at all. His only residence, when not living officially at the Admiralty, was a small copyhold house and garden with a field at the back of it. He was the fourth of eight children. During his whole life he had very little besides his pay; and he refused a pension when it was offered to him.

CHARTS AND SOUNDINGS.

The next subject that claims our attention is that of the charts, soundings &c. On this question Lord Dundonald appears to have changed his views

* For Admiral Harvey's remarks on that occasion, vide "Minutes of his Court-Martial," also "Autobiography of a Seaman."

more than once. He stated on the Court-Martial that, for a period of years, he had not found the French charts defective in any material point, and that from these charts he had "at all times drawn his conclusions with respect to the depth of water, and other circumstances relating to the navigation on that enemy's coast;"* whilst he told Sir Harry Neale,† on the 6th of April, that they were not to be depended on: and he complains in his Autobiography,‡ that the chart of one of the master's of the fleet was made the basis of the trial, to the exclusion of the official charts, which official charts he declared in evidence§ to be "abominable, and not fit to be delivered out."

The evidence of the two Masters, Messrs. Fairfax and Stokes, as contained in the Minutes, differs widely from Lord Dundonald's statement respecting it. In the Autobiography, vol. i., p. 360, we read that "one of these men constructed a chart of the soundings, as of his own personal knowledge, and in his verbal evidence said that he had *never sounded at all.*"

The person thus vaguely described as "one of these men" must be either Mr. Fairfax, master of the fleet, or Mr. Stokes, master of the 'Caledonia,'

* Minutes, p. 68. Lord Cochrane's Evidence.

† Ibid, p. 193. Sir H. Neale's Evidence.

‡ Autobiography, vol. i. p. 360.

§ Minutes, p. 40. Lord Cochrane's Evidence.

because no other witness, except Lord Cochrane, produced a chart before the Court.

Neither of them, however, said that he had "never sounded at all." Mr. Fairfax certainly said that he had not sounded* the "space for the anchorage of large ships in Aix Roads." But as his soundings were made previous to the night-attack on the 11th of April—and as, previous† to that date, "the entrance to the pass was guarded by a boom, three frigates, and armed boats, whilst captains of line-of-battle ships and frigates went their rounds at night outside the boom"—‡ it is difficult to imagine how such soundings could have been effected.

But Mr. Fairfax cannot be the person indicated, as he did not give evidence until the *sixth* day of the trial. Therefore the charge rests against Mr. Stokes, who was the first witness examined, and whose chart was the one submitted to other witnesses for verification.§

Having premised thus much, it is but bare justice to the memory of the master of the 'Caledonia' that we should examine the evidence he gave respecting the chart or charts which he produced

* Minutes, p. 143.

† Ibid.

‡ Intercepted letters from a French officer on board the 'Océan.'

§ Minutes, pp. 157, 167, 171, 175, 177, etc.

before the Court. The following is his evidence on that subject.*

"I prepared that drawing partly from the knowledge I gained in sounding to the southward of the Palles shoal, and the anchorage of the Isle d'Aix. The outlines of the chart are taken from the "Neptune Français," the position of the enemy's fleet from Mr. Edward Fairfax, and from the French captain of the 'Ville de Varsovie,' and the British fleet from my own observations. It cannot be expected that, from the opportunities† I had of sounding in this place, I could accurately point out the distance between the sands; therefore for anything respecting that, I must refer the Court to the chart which I copied from a French manuscript, which will be produced here; and that I take to be correct.‡ This chart I produce as containing the various positions."

As respects the credibility of Mr. Stokes' statements in his evidence, a *résumé* of which will presently be given, it may be as well to mention here, that, from the 16th to the 24th of April, he sounded and surveyed the anchorage within the Isle d'Aix, and the space between the Boyart and Palles &c.§

* Minutes, p. 28.

† Vide French officer's letters, ut supra.

‡ Chart taken in 1807, from the French frigate 'l'Armide.'

§ Minutes, p. 153.

Of course the grounds of Lord Gambier's opinion relative to the depth of water in Aix Roads can only be tested by the knowledge which he acquired *before* the night of the 11th from a comparison of the French and English charts, and from such surveys as the masters were able to make; but the soundings made from the 17th to the 24th April, without hindrance from the enemy—their ships being then in the Charente, except one that was aground at the mouth of the river—materially affect Mr. Stokes' statement on oath, which thus becomes the severest ordeal that Lord Gambier's judgment, as exercised on the morning of the 12th, could subsequently be made to pass. This ordeal he did pass triumphantly, as will appear from the evidence of Mr. Stokes on the Court-Martial.

With one more notice we will dismiss the question of the soundings for the present—*i. e.* till the *résumé* of the evidence is made. Lord Dundonald says, that "a better proof of the untruths told by the masters of the fleet and 'Caledonia,' could not be afforded than their ignorance of the existence of the boom."* This view of the case does not well harmonize with the fact that Lord Dundonald himself was equally ignorant of its existence,† though he‡ "made as minute a reconnaissance

* Autobiography, vol. i. p. 373.

† Autobiography, p. 373.

‡ Autobiography, vol. i. p. 362.

as was practicable," and told Lord Mulgrave,* that on the evening of his arrival he had been very close to the Isle d'Aix.

Nor does Lord Dundonald's sweeping condemnation of the masters of the fleet and flag-ship hang gracefully by the side of the following passage in Captain Kerr's evidence: "I felt the situation of the ships to be dangerous, and I sent him [the master] to sound round. On his return, he told me that Lord Cochrane had informed him '*he did not know*, but that he *believed* there was water to windward that is, to the northward —under the batteries.'" (Vide Minutes, p. 212.)

FURNACES FOR HEATING SHOT.

Lord Dundonald casts much ridicule† upon Lord Gambier for saying that the attacking ships would be exposed to be raked by red-hot shot from the Isle d'Aix; nevertheless he himself reported‡ to Sir Harry Neale, on the 5th of April, that he had seen five furnaces for heating shot burning there at the same time. Whilst on this subject, I would ask the reader to bear in mind that two distinct attacks were made, viz. the night-attack by fire-ships on the 11th, and the day-attack by line-of-battle ships, frigates &c. on the 12th; because, in

* Autobiography—Lord Cochrane's letter to Lord Mulgrave, p. 363.

† Autobiography, p. 352, 369.

‡ Minutes, p. 194, 135.

reference to having passed the batteries safely in an explosion-vessel, *on a dark squally night*, Lord Dundonald says: "A more striking commentary on the red-hot shot could scarcely be found:"* whereas Lord Gambier's despatch says: "The space for their anchorage is so confined by the shoalness of the water, as not to admit of ships to run in and anchor clear of each other..... Such ships, therefore, as might attack the enemy, would be exposed to be raked by the red-hot shot, &c., from the island,"† distinctly referring to a contemplated *day-attack* by line-of-battle ships and frigates.

If the reader will refer to the despatch in question, which he will find either in page 119 of the printed Minutes or in a subsequent page of this volume, he will see that Lord Gambier's meaning is unmistakable.

Lord Dundonald's argument is singular. He says,‡ that having himself approached within *half a mile* of the Isle d'Aix on the night of the 11th, he must have been blown up, had a red-hot shot hit the explosion-vessel in which he was; but that he had no fear of such a result, because he knew that there was *plenty of room* in the Channel to keep out of the way of such missiles, 'even if by

* Autobiography, p. 360.

† Despatch of March 25th. Minutes, p. 4.

‡ Autobiography, p. 369.

blue lights and other devices, they had discovered the approach of his vessel. He also says that Admiral Allemand had given instructions to the Commandant of the island, to use every precaution in case of the projected attack.

Inasmuch then as he (Lord Cochrane) approached within half a mile of a garrison on the alert for an expected attack—inasmuch as, by his own report to Lord Gambier and Sir Harry Neale,* there were five furnaces for heating shot on the island—and inasmuch as he admits negatively that the enemy did not, "by means of blue lights, or other devices, discover his approach" till the vessel had exploded, and himself and crew were pulling back towards the 'Impérieuse'—it is evident that the darkness of the night *alone* saved him and his gallant comrades from destruction, and equally evident that his inference is inapplicable to Lord Gambier's despatch.

It seems strange that Lord Dundonald should thus depreciate his own gallantry on that occasion, than which none could be greater, according to every evidence except his own. To sail in an explosion-vessel within half a mile of an enemy's battery stored with red-hot shot—to command that vessel steadily and self-possessedly, when each plunge she makes through the howling darkness may disclose her position to the enemy, and the

* Minutes, p. 135, 194.

next moment a few blackened spars and scattered limbs hideously mangled float on the curling waves beneath—to say of a man that he did this thing, is to say he has touched the summit of physical daring; and why Lord Dundonald should seek to detract from the merits that stand recorded of him by eye-witnesses, is a question that overmasters conjecture. Yet he does so twice. He not only ridicules the idea of danger from red-hot shot, after having reported the existence of five furnaces for heating it, but he denies having run any risk of being boarded by the French guard-boats; though, a few pages later, he affirms that same risk to have been a positive fact.

From the two following extracts it would appear that Lord Dundonald held a divided opinion on this subject. In his Autobiography, page 371, he says:

"His Lordship [Gambier] urged that the fire-ships might be boarded and the crews murdered, though there was more danger of this from delay, than from attacking unawares. There was in reality no danger."

Whilst, at page 417 of the same book, he says: "Notwithstanding that by going first, I ran all the risk of being boarded by the French guard-boat, and myself and crew murdered, as would have been the case had we been captured, &c., &c."

Lord Dundonald says, at page 371, that Colonel

Cochrane and Lieutenant Bissel had volunteered to accompany him in the explosion-vessel, "so well satisfied were both of the little danger to be apprehended." No doubt these two officers felt flattered at this view of their services.

The "delay" spoken of in the first quotations from the Autobiography, refers to the following circumstance. Lord Cochrane had pressed Lord Gambier to make the attack by fire-ships on the night of the 10th; and we read in the Autobiography that, by his not having done so, "a most favourable opportunity was thrown away." Nevertheless, by a French General Order found on board one of the captured ships, it appears that, had the attack taken place on the 10th, the fire-ships would have been boarded—seventy-three launches having been equipped for that purpose; whereas the heavy gale that blew on the night of the 11th, when the attack was made, prevented these defensive measures from being adopted.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FIRE-SHIPS.

The next question is the management of the fire-ships. Lord Dundonald censures, without exception,* the conduct of all the officers commanding them; but a French officer, embarked on board the 'Océan,' gives in a private letter a very different account of them. This letter will hereafter be

* Autobiography, p. 379, 380, etc.

given. Also Captain Wolfe of the 'Aigle,' who was stationed near the Boyart,* to receive the returning crews of the fire-ships, stated in evidence† that he had seen "five behave very well."

But the evidence thereupon is scanty and defective, because that question did not bear upon the charge. Lord Gambier says, in his defence, that the blowing up of Lord Cochrane's explosion-vessel was to be the signal for kindling the fire-ships, and consequently its premature explosion caused the premature kindling of some of the latter. As this account clears from blame all but the manufacturer of the fusees, it seems more consistent with the well-proved character of the British navy than the unavoidable alternative suggested by Lord Dundonald.

Of the effect produced by them, Lord Dundonald's account is amusingly at variance with Admiral Allemand's despatch. Lord Dundonald says:‡ "They did no damage whatever: only four reached the enemy's position."

Admiral Allemand says, "The fire-ships came in full sail against the whole of our line, and partially against the 'Océan,' It was all over with His Majesty's ship; the flames spread rapidly over her,"§ &c., &c.

* Minutes, p. 12.

† Minutes, 216.

‡ Autobiography, 379, 380.

§ Moniteur of April 23, 1809.

Mr. James, in reference to Captain Proteau's statement that the explosion-vessel blew up within half a cable's length of the 'Indienne,' says: "What then becomes of the statement of Mr. Fairfax, the master of Lord Gambier's fleet, that the explosion-vessel blew up 'about a mile from the enemy?'"*

What becomes of it seems evident enough. It becomes a question of veracity, as between Captain Proteau and Mr. Fairfax. As Lord Dundonald accuses Lord Gambier and nearly all the witnesses on the Court-Martial of telling untruths, and the members of the Court-Martial (by implication) of having perjured themselves, a non-naval reader can only infer that such practices were usual among naval officers in 1809: and hence, reasoning by analogy—that a French captain was as likely to be under the influence of the epidemic as anyone else; more especially when the probabilities of impartiality in Captain Proteau and Mr. Fairfax are considered and compared—Captain Proteau having to make the most of the dangers he had encountered *avec courage et sang-froid* previous to losing his ship —and Mr. Fairfax being an irresponsible spectator, giving his evidence on oath. There seems no

* Mr. Fairfax meant a mile from the enemy's line-of-battle ships. He says that "the 'Lyra' was a mile and a quarter, and the explosion-vessel (when she blew up) a quarter of a mile nearer." *See his Evidence. Minutes, p.* 124.

reason for allowing the British navy a monopoly of "perversions, suppressions and untruths."*

Mr. James's off-hand manner of pooh-poohing Mr. Fairfax sounds strangely from a *landsman* describing what he did *not* see to a master in the navy stating what he *did* see; and it sounds more strangely still when we find that, unless Mr. Fairfax deliberately perjured himself, his (Mr. James's) assertion agrees neither with Lord Dundonald's account nor with his own figures.

The data are as follows:

First.—Mr. James states, on the authority of Captain Proteau of the 'Indienne,' that the explosion-vessel blew up at the boom.†

Secondly.—Lord Dundonald states that the fusees "which had been constructed to last fifteen minutes, lasted little more than half that time;"‡ and that the rockets, grenades &c., went over his head as he was pulling back from the explosion-vessel.

Thirdly.—Mr. Fairfax states on oath that, being on board the 'Lyra,' he hailed the boats from the explosion-vessel immediately after the explosion, and that they answered him.§ This could be no question of opinion or judgment; but either he told the truth, or deliberately, and without any conceivable motive, swore to a falsehood.

* Autobiography.

† Naval History, vol. v. p. 138.

‡ Autobiography, p. 377.

§ Minutes, 183.

According to Mr. James, the relative distances are:

From the first French line to the French advanced frigates .	740 yards*
From the French advanced frigate to the boom . . .	110 „
	850 „

From the first French line to the 'Lyra' "rather less than two miles."

This gives from the boom to the 'Lyra' a distance of not less than a mile and a half.

Inasmuch then as Mr. Fairfax swore to having hailed and having been answered by the boats from the 'Impérieuse' immediately after the explosion—inasmuch as, to have answered him, they must have passed close to the 'Lyra,' which was a mile and a half from the spot where Mr. James and Lord Dundonald state the explosion to have taken place—at which time Lord Dundonald was, by his own statement, so near to the explosion-vessel that the missiles went over his head—it follows that, if Mr. James is correct as to the distances, the boats from the explosion-vessel must have come nearly a mile and a half in less than eight minutes, or, according to Lieutenant Bissel, in six minutes and a half against a strong head-wind and tide.

The real question therefore is: What becomes of Mr. James's statement?

* Naval History, vol. v. p. 103, 104.

The evidence against Mr. Fairfax's assertion having thus broken down, it may not be amiss to inquire if there be any in favour of it. As this question did not bear upon the charge, and Lord Cochrane raised no doubts respecting it in his evidence, it was scarcely noticed on the trial. But the following extract from the Minutes affords evidence as strongly presumptive as can well be imagined.

Mr. Fairfax.—"Lieutenant Bissel and Lord Cochrane were together, and I asked, 'What was the reason you set fire to the explosion vessel so close?' "He (Lieutenant Bissel) said the fusees burnt only six minutes and a half, instead of twenty. Lord Cochrane himself lighted the fusees.

Q.—"By being so close, you meant so close to the 'Lyra,' not the enemy?"

A.—"Yes: I said you had like to have blown me up, and not the enemy."—Evidence of Mr. Fairfax.*

By this it appears, from evidence on oath, that Lieutenant Bissel, who had been with Lord Cochrane when the latter lighted the fusees, not only did not deny, but, by his answer, tacitly admitted, in the presence of Lord Cochrane, Mr. Fairfax's statement.

Mr. Fairfax's account hangs well together, and proves that Lord Cochrane's calculation as to the

* Minutes, p. 184.

time of lighting the fusees was admirably correct. The 'Lyra,' (he says,) "was about a mile and a quarter from the French line-of-battle ships, and the explosion-vessel, when she blew up, a quarter of a mile nearer." Thus, had the fusees sent out from England been properly made, the explosion-vessel, going with a strong wind and tide, would, (setting aside the boom, of whose existence neither Lord Cochrane nor any one belonging to the British fleet was aware) have blown up among the French line-of-battle ships. Since this is the best possible tribute to Lord Dundonald's judgment, as exercised on that occasion, it comes oddly from one described by him as a personal enemy who told untruths on the Court-Martial,* or, in other words, perjured himself. Far more strangely however do the words "suppressions and perversions" come from Lord Dundonald's pen in reference to *that despatch in which all concerning him is dwelt upon, except the unavoidable failure of the explosion-vessel.* But this part of the subject belongs to a future page: the immediate question now is the breaking of the boom.

As Captain Woolridge's report respecting this occurrence was never questioned until Lord Dundonald disputed it fifty years afterwards, but, on the contrary, was so well accepted by the navy

* Autobiography of a Seaman.

and the nation at large, that he was for the service in question presented with a gold medal and chain which he wore undisputedly till his death—the evidence must necessarily be very limited.

On the one hand, Captain Woolridge reported to Lord Gambier, that the 'Mediator' had broken it—on the other, Lord Dundonald affirms* that it was broken by the upheaving of the sea, consequent on the blowing up of the first explosion-vessel. This question being now mooted for the first time, it is almost needless to add that there is no evidence directly in support of either statement; the only evidence at all bearing on the point being that of Captain Proteau and Mr. Fairfax,† as before mentioned; which having already been considered, it only remains for the reader to compare probabilities in the respective statements of Lord Cochrane and Captain Woolridge—bearing in mind that, at the time referred to, the former was on his way back to the 'Impérieuse,'‡ and the latter actually on *board* the ship which he affirms to have broken the boom. Moreover, Lord Dundonald might easily have been mistaken as to his estimated position of the

* Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 401—2.

† Because Mr. Fairfax speaking of the 'Mediator' which he knew, and of four other smaller fire-ships which he did not know, said, "I hailed four of them, and the 'Mediator' etc." Lord Dundonald assumes that the 'Mediator,' was the fifth.

‡ Autobiography of a Seaman.

advanced French ships, since he says* that the night was "too dark to discern them."

Before dismissing this question, it is necessary to notice a passage in the Autobiography, which states that Captain Woolridge "reiterated in his evidence on the Court-Martial the statement he had previously made to Lord Gambier, viz: that *his ship*, and not the explosion-vessel broke the boom."†

So far from having given evidence on the Court-Martial, Captain Woolridge was not even summoned to attend: nor, if summoned, would he have had any relevant evidence to give—no doubt being raised, or question asked, respecting the boom—and his duty having ended with the burning of his own fire-ship, out of which he was blown on the evening before the day on whose occurrences the trial turned.

* Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 377.

‡ Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 399.

CHAPTER VIII.

We now pass on to the proceedings of the 12th.

By the log of the 'Caledonia,' it appears* that Lord Cochrane signalled to the Admiral as follows:

5.48 A.M. "half the fleet can destroy the enemy, seven on shore."

7.40 "Only two afloat."

9.25 "Enemy preparing to haul off."

Lord Cochrane's two logs† record as third, the signal above mentioned as first; and word it "*Part of the fleet*" instead of "*half the fleet.*" In his evidence on the Court-Martial, Lord Cochrane acknowledges‡ that the signal was for half the fleet.§ This would seem a trivial matter, had not Lord Cochrane's evidence contradicted the two logs verified by himself, and had he not said on

* Log of 'Caledonia,' also Minutes, p. 39.

† *i.e.*, that produced before the Court by himself, and that which he forwarded to Lord Gambier by order.—*Vide Appendix to Minutes.*

‡ Minutes, p. 39.

§ In the Autobiography it is placed third, but is worded half the fleet—the difference being as to time.

the Court-Martial, that at any period after daylight and before half-past eleven o'clock A.M. two sail of the line aided by the frigates could have destroyed the enemy—having previously acknowledged in the same evidence that he had signalled for "half the fleet at 5.48."

As Lord Dundonald accuses Lord Gambier of writing contradictory despatches, and calls the evidence on the Court-Martial "contradictory" and "incomprehensible,"† it is but fair to mention this instance in which those terms seem so well chosen. After his very unmeasured condemnation of Lord Gambier, the members of the Court-Martial and nearly all the witnesses—it is strange to find by his own evidence that he considered two ships of the line, aided by the frigates, sufficient for a purpose to accomplish which he had signalled for "half the fleet."

Lord Dundonald states in his Autobiography that, on the morning in question, he made the following telegraph signal—The "frigates alone can destroy the enemy."

This signal is not in the 'Caledonia's' log—was denied by her signal-lieutenant—was not mentioned by Lord Cochrane in his evidence, even when affirming the position contained in it—and is not to be found either in the log of the 'Impé-

* Minutes, p. 53, 54.

‡ Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 375.

rieuse,' in Lord Cochrane's own log, or in the log which Lord Cochrane delivered to Lord Gambier.

Next in order to the signals are the measures taken by Lord Gambier, which were as follows: Having given his orders to the respective Captains on board the 'Caledonia,'* and sent the 'Etna' bomb and three gun-brigs into Aix Roads,† he stood in with the fleet,‡ and anchored at, or soon after eleven o'clock, at a distance of about three miles from the Citadel on the Isle d'Aix.§

The 'Etna' bomb went into the attack about half an hour before the 'Impérieuse' opened her fire,‖ and passed her about one o'clock, the gun-brigs going in at the same time.¶

The 'Beagle' (18 gun-brig) went in immediately after the 'Impérieuse' signalled for assistance, which signal appears to have been made about 1.45.** The 'Valiant'†† and 'Revenge'‡‡ (line-of-battle ships) and the frigates went in from two to half past two. The 'Theseus'§§ and 'Cæsar'‖‖ line-of-battle ships (the latter being Rear-admiral Stopford's

* Minutes. p. 87. † Ibid, p. 47, 178—9.
‡ Ibid, general evidence. § Ibid, p. 47, 178—9.
‖ Ibid. ¶ Minutes, p. 179.
** In this as in all the evidence as to time, a margin must be allowed for the difference in watches, but the general evidence of the logs, &c. gives the hour above stated.
†† Minutes, p. 159. ‡‡ Ibid, p. 172.
§§ Ibid, pp. 100, 195, 198, 129.
‖‖ Ibid, p. 196.

flag-ship) followed—the 'Theseus'* at five o'clock, and the 'Cæsar'† afterwards.

The résumé of the evidence will enable the reader to judge whether these ships and vessels were, or were not sent in as soon as practicable.

In the meantime, Lord Dundonald's views thereon claim our attention. They are briefly comprehended in these two propositions. First—that when the 'Impérieuse' signalled at or shortly after daylight on the morning of the 12th, Lord Gambier ought to have sent in a portion of the fleet to attack the French ships. Secondly, that whereas Lord Gambier was to blame in not doing so then, he was *a fortiori* still more to blame in not sending in the ships until two or half past two o'clock. This opinion is founded on the assumption that the wind, tide and depth of water were so favourable to the undertaking as to admit of its being executed without undue risk to the ships employed in it. As this comprehends the whole question examined into by the court-martial, a résumé of which will presently be given, it is only necessary to say in this place, that of the nineteen‡

* Minutes, p. 80.

† The exact hour when the 'Cæsar' went in is not named in the evidence. Admiral Stopford said that "the 'Theseus' went in a little before the 'Cæsar.'" Lord Cochrane said "that the 'Cæsar' did not go in till it was dark."—*Minutes, p.* 60, 80.

‡ Exclusive of Lord Cochrane, there were twenty-six witnesses but from this number we must substract seven who were not ques-

witnesses examined on this the main point, *not one said that the attack could have been made when Lord Cochrane signalled to that effect.*

One of them* thought, "from what he afterwards saw," that the ships might have floated in sooner than they did. Another† (who was not sent in to Aix Roads) named between eleven and twelve o'clock, as a possibly advantageous time for the attack; and a third,‡ (who was also not sent in) said that it might have been done about noon *at the risk of the fleet;* whilst the overwhelming majority, which included Admiral Stopford and the captains of those line-of-battle ships that *were* sent in, and who therefore were best qualified to judge, *unanimously declared that there had been no neglect or delay whatever, and that Lord Gambier had made the utmost use of the means and opportunities at his command.*

But Lord Dundonald is not satisfied with blaming Lord Gambier for not giving up his judgment to the captain of a frigate. He takes upon himself to assert that Lord Gambier had no *intention* of making any attack with the ships of the fleet, and would never have sent the ships in at all,

tioned upon the main point—such as the Masters, Signal Officers, Admiral's Secretary, &c.

† Captain Seymour.

‡ Captain Broughton.

§ Captain Newcombe.

had not the 'Impérieuse' drifted in and signalled for assistance.*

His reasoning on this matter is curious. He argues, that *because* the commander of a bomb-vessel did not know the plans of the commander-in-chief,† *therefore* the commander-in-chief had no intention of attacking with any part of the fleet; although it is stated in evidence, that *five hours before* the 'Impérieuse' went in and signalled for assistance, Captains Bligh and Kerr, with other captains of line-of-battle ships and frigates, *received orders from Lord Gambier in his own cabin* to anchor near the Boyart shoal, "*to be ready to support the smaller vessels in the advance.*"‡

Mr. James also is good enough to stand sponsor for Lord Gambier's *intention*, alleging, in support of his opinion, that Lord Gambier did not make the customary signal for the ships to prepare for battle, and get springs on their cables.§ The most practical comment on which is the following Evidence of Admiral Stopford: "From the

* Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 386.

† On my asking her commander, [the 'Etna' bomb] "what attack was going to be made on the enemy by the fleet?" he replied, "that he knew nothing further than that he was ordered to bombard the ships ashore." This was proof enough that no intention of attacking with the fleet, or any part of it, existed.—*Autobiography of a Seaman, p.* 386.

‡ Minutes, p. 238. Evidence of Captain Bligh, Kerr, Admiral Stopford, Mr. Wilkinson, &c.

§ James's Naval History, vol. v. p. 112.

general signal having been made for ships to prepare for battle, *with springs on their cables*, and to bend their sheet cables through the stern ports, also from the conversation I had with the commander-in-chief, and witnessing his impatience and disappointment at circumstances not allowing him immediately to go in with the fleet, it was my full conviction that such were the commander-in-chief's *intentions that the ships should go in as far as they could, and as soon as they could.*"*

On this point Lord Dundonald brings forward one more argument; and that argument imperatively demands our notice, because it totally misleads the reader as to the facts to which it refers. It is contained in the following sentence:† "Lord Gambier afterwards admitted that as the object of their destruction seemed to be attained, there was no occasion to risk any part of the fleet."

The terms "omissions," "suppressions," "perversions," and "mis-statements,"‡ so unsparingly predicated of Lord Gambier, are painfully applicable to this sentence. To explain which I must apparently digress for a moment, in order to inform the reader of one very important fact, of which neither Lord Dundonald nor Mr. James make any mention whatever, albeit the fact is stated by a

* Admiral Stopford's Evidence. Minutes, p. 87.

† Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 384.

‡ Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 416, &c.

witness* whose evidence is claimed by Lord Dundonald as favouring his own views, and is published in the Minutes which Mr. James affirms to have had before him whilst writing his Naval History. This fact, which was well known in the fleet, is thus related in a letter from an eye-witness to the "Naval Chronicle."

"The Commander-in-chief's first plan was, that the 'Caledonia' and 'Cæsar' were to lie against, and attempt to silence, the batteries of the Fort of the Isle d'Aix, while the attack was made on the enemy's ships on shore by smaller vessels. It was, however, the opinion of every officer and of the pilots, that there would not be water there for those large ships; *so that Lord Gambier was obliged to abandon this plan, and I can take upon myself to say, with reluctance, for I witnessed his anxiety and mortification at that moment.*"

The question for the Court-Martial to decide being, whether that which *was* done could have been done sooner, Lord Gambier could not, of course, refer in his defence to that which was not *done at all.* Hence his first project of *going in himself*, (although well known among the officers of the fleet) was only mentioned accidentally on the trial by Captain Broughton.

And this brings us to the point to which our apparent digression has been leading us; for Captain

* Captain Broughton.

Broughton's evidence, above referred to, is precisely that which Lord Dundonald converts into the sentence already quoted from page 384 of his Autobiography. Captain Broughton's words are: "I heard my Lord Gambier the same morning (the 12th) state it had been his intention to have gone against the batteries I now speak of,* with the 'Caledonia' and some other ship;† but as the enemy were on shore, he did not think it necessary to run any unnecessary risk of the fleet, &c."

Captain Broughton having, as he here states, heard Lord Gambier say this on the morning of the 12th, he could only have heard it on board the 'Caledonia,' when summoned there with the rest of the captains. And as Captains Bligh, Kerr, &c., received orders from Lord Gambier at 8 A.M. to anchor near the Boyart shoal in readiness to advance, and the general signal for ships to prepare for battle with springs on their cables was made about the same time, (as sworn to by Admiral Stopford, and recorded in the 'Caledonia's log,) it is almost an impertinence to point to the unavoidable conclusion that the terms "unnecessary risk" could only refer to Lord Gambier's *original intention of taking the 'Caledonia' and 'Cæsar' up to the batteries,* which intention Captain Broughton mentions *in the same sentence.*

The summary of all which amounts to this: Lord Gambier orders the ships to prepare for battle with

* On the Isle d'Aix. † The 'Cæsar.'

springs on their cables, and three line-of-battle ships, with the frigates, to anchor near the Boyart in readiness to go in. When giving these orders verbally to the Rear-Admiral and Captains assembled on board the 'Caledonia,' he communicates to all or certain of them *another* intention, which he had been forced to abandon: and, in distinct reference to the ships which he had just ordered to anchor near the Boyart, refers to the scattered state of the grounded ships as a reason why his original project of going up to the batteries himself was no longer a question of such paramount importance as to justify him in taking a 120 gun ship and an 80 gun ship to almost certain destruction.

This Lord Dundonald interprets as an *after* admission by Lord Gambier, that there was no occasion *to risk any part* of the fleet.

Reviewing in order the events of the 12th, it will be remembered that the 'Valiant,' 'Revenge' and frigates went in between two and half past two P.M., and that, in the course of the day, four French ships were destroyed—the first being the 'Calcutta.'

Respecting which Lord Dundonald says,* "that the 'Calcutta' had been abandoned by her crew, and taken possession of by the boats of the 'Im-

* Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 388.

périeuse' before the other ships came down." This is not only denied on oath by Captains Bligh and Rodd, but also by himself in his evidence on the Court-Martial—as follows:

Captain Bligh, of the 'Valiant,' said in evidence: "A little after three we commenced our fire on the 'Calcutta,' and shortly after I observed her crew abandon her, leaving her colours flying."* ..... "I have already stated that the 'Calcutta' never struck her colours. The officer of the 'Beagle' reported to me that he had taken possession of the 'Calcutta,' and that there was nobody on board; that the crew had abandoned her."

Captain Rodd of the 'Indefatigable,' being asked whether "the 'Calcutta' or any of the enemy's line-of-battle ships struck to the 'Impérieuse' before he anchored and commenced the action," answered; "most assuredly not. Several broadsides were fired at the 'Calcutta' from the 'Indefatigable' and 'Valiant,' when Lord Cochrane, or some person from the 'Impérieuse' hailed me and said the 'Calcutta' had struck."†

Captain Lord Cochrane of the 'Impérieuse,' said: "Several [ships], when anchored, opened their fire upon all the ships that were within reach, to wit, the 'Ville de Varsovie,' the 'Aquilon,' and *the Calcutta.*"‡

* Minutes, p. 159. † Minutes, p. 102.

‡ Minutes, p. 50.

Lord Dundonald says* that, On the Court-Martial the 'Calcutta' was declared to have struck *to the ships sent to the assistance* of the 'Impérieuse.'" This is incorrect—as the preceding page has already evidenced. What was said was as follows: That she never struck her colours at all—that she was abandoned by her crew,† after being fired at by the 'Valiant,' &c.—and that boats from the 'Impérieuse' and 'Beagle'‡ simultaneously went to take possession of her.

Further, Lord Dundonald says,§ that Lord Gambier *afterwards denied* the striking of the 'Calcutta' to the 'Impérieuse.' This is also incorrect. Lord Gambier said;‖ "In my public despatch I stated that the 'Calcutta' struck to the 'Impérieuse,' which I inserted on the authority of Lord Cochrane, who so informed me when he came on board the 'Caledonia.' Lord Cochrane having made that statement, I did justice to his merits and services in inserting it; but a doubt having been suggested on the subject, I wish to have that point cleared up, in justice to the other officers of the fleet."

Against the evidence of Captains Bligh, Rodd and Newcombe, Lord Dundonald urges¶ the fact, that Captain Lafon, of the 'Calcutta,' was shot by sentence of a court-martial. But the

* Autobiography, p. 388.
† Minutes, p. 159.
‡ Minutes, p. 206.
§ Autobiography.
‖ Minutes, p. 157.
¶ Autobiography, p. 388.

sentence, to whose equity he thus appeals, puzzles one's notions of justice, when we find that Captain Lacaille, for abandoning his ship unattacked, just as he was preparing to heave her off, was sentenced by the same tribunal to degradation and two years' imprisonment only, because he did not lose his ship, *i. e.*, because she was not taken during his absence, and because he afterwards defended her against an enemy that could not get near her; while Captain Lafon was shot for abandoning a store-ship to two line-of-battle ships and some frigates, after a struggle in which, by Lord Dundonald's own account, he had inflicted considerable damage on the 'Impérieuse.'

Again, at page 388 of his Autobiography, Lord Dundonald says that Captain Lafon was shot "clearly for having abandoned his ship to inferior force—" though how a well-manned frigate, cleverly and bravely commanded, could be inferior to a half-manned store-ship, is not easy to understand: at page 393, on the contrary, he attributes all the damage sustained by the 'Impérieuse' during the action to the "*brave but unfortunate* Captain [Lafon] of the 'Calcutta.'"

Returning to the order of events, we find that at 3.30 P.M.* the 'Valiant,' &c. still firing at the 'Aquilon' and 'Ville de Varsovie,'

* Vide log of 'Impérieuse,' Lord Cochrane's log, &c.

the 'Impérieuse ceased firing, her captain and crew being much fatigued.*

On this point Lord Dundonald goes on to say†—that he ceased firing then "because the other ships were more than sufficient to destroy the enemy which remained; and that if the British ships had been sent in time, they would have been abundantly sufficient, had they not been recalled, to have destroyed all those that got away." He also appends to the words, "had they not been recalled," the following note: "The 'Valiant' line-of-battle ship even signalled to this effect, as appears from the log of the 'Caledonia,' Lord Gambier's flag-ship. 'Valiant' signalled to flag, 'No doubt five more may be destroyed to-night.' The reply was a signal of recall."‡

Whether Lord Gambier could have done more by sending in ships sooner, will appear from the *résumé* about to be given of the evidence; but as regards the signal made by the 'Valiant'—open statements and misleading insinuations are here so interwoven, that I must crave the reader's patience for a longer reply than words so few would seem to require.

In the course of the afternoon, Lord Gambier determined, if possible, to attack the five ships lying aground out of reach at the mouth of the

* Autobiography, p. 389.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

Charente; and for this purpose fitted out four fire-ships*—sending Admiral Stopford, with the 'Cæsar' and 'Theseus,' into Aix Roads, with discretional orders to proceed as far as he could.†

In reference to this project, signals passed between the 'Caledonia'‡ and 'Valiant,' whose captain [Bligh] was to have charge of the fire-ships: hence the signal from the latter, "No doubt five more can be destroyed to-night." The wind being contrary, Captain Bligh was unable to make use of the fire-ships.§ The 'Cæsar' grounded, remained three hours aground, and profiting by a shift of the wind, came out at daylight.‖ The 'Theseus,' which had also grounded,¶ came out at the same time.

At daylight on the 13th, Admiral Stopford, seeing

* Minutes, pp. 129, 159, &c.

† Minutes, pp. 80, 129, &c.

‡ Vide log of 'Caledonia.'

§ "Four fire-vessels were all prepared by the Commander-in-chief, and were sent in afterwards; two to have gone against the 'Foudroyant,' under the direction of Captain Seymour, and two against the 'Océan,' a three-decked ship. It was eleven o'clock or half-past eleven before they were completely ready, when the wind being baffling and at times blowing directly out, I applied to Admiral Stopford for some gun-brigs to cover the retreat of our boats; the enemy's boats being moored in two lines across the stern of the 'Océan' with boats in advance. As the wind continued to blow directly out until four o'clock in the morning, I judged the attempt to be impracticable; and therefore ordered the fire-vessels to move where the 'Impérieuse' was laid, to follow the directions of Lord Cochrane."—*Captain Bligh's Evidence. Minutes, p.* 160.

‖ Minutes, p. 81. ¶ Ibid.

that nothing more could be effected by large ships, and that the 'Valiant,' 'Revenge' &c. were in imminent danger, ordered them out of Aix Roads.*

We will now compare Lord Dundonald's above quoted statements with the evidence contained in the two notes at the bottom of this and the preceding page.

Abstract of the Evidence from the Court-Martial contained in the above mentioned notes.

Signals pass between Lord Gambier and Captain Bligh, relative to a project of attempting to destroy the grounded French ships by means of fire-ships, supported by the 'Theseus' and 'Cæsar.' In reference to this, Captain Bligh signals: "No doubt five more can be destroyed to-night." Lord Gambier sends the fire-ships; but circumstances prevent their being used. Rear-Admiral Stopford,

* *Q.*—"Were they recalled by signal, or by any other means, by the Commander-in-chief?"

Admiral Stopford.—"They were recalled by no order from the Commander-in-chief, but came out, a part of them by directions from me—the 'Theseus' and 'Valiant;' and I must add that I ordered the 'Revenge' to come out, but I am not sure whether Captain Kerr received my orders; the ship came out the next morning."

Q.—"What was your reason for calling those ships from the services on which they were ordered, without directions from the Commander-in-chief?"

Admiral Stopford.—"The imminent and evident danger to which the ships were exposed by a longer continuance in that anchorage; also the certainty that they could not be employed with effect in the further destruction of the enemy's ships."—*Admiral Stopford's Evidence. Minutes, p.* 81.

in the exercise of his discretion, orders out of Aix Roads, at daylight on the 13th, the 'Valiant' and other line-of-battle ships that Lord Gambier had sent in on the 12th.

*Abstract of Lord Dundonald's account of the same.**

Lord Dundonald states, that had the line-of-battle ships &c. been "sent in time," on the 12th, *and not been recalled,* they could have destroyed all the French ships that got away—that the 'Valiant' *even signalled to that effect;* and that "the reply was a signal of recall."

I cannot pass on to the 13th without noticing that Mr. James denies the fact of the 'Theseus' and 'Revenge' having grounded,† though the fact was stated on oath; and, in the Minutes *which he affirms to have had before him,* stands thus recorded: "The captains of the 'Theseus' and 'Valiant' also informed me, on that evening, that their ships had been aground."—*Admiral Stopford's evidence.*‡

"When the 'Revenge' quitted her situation, her keel was in the mud, &c."—*Captain Kerr's evidence.*§

"As the tide fell, the 'Revenge' grounded; but by the exertions of Captain Kerr she was soon got off."— *Captain Bligh's evidence.*‖

* Vide Autobiography, p. 389.

† James's Naval History, vol. v. p. 116.

‡ Minutes, p. 81. § Minutes, p. 173. ‖ Minutes, p. 159.

CHAPTER IX.

THE order of the narrative now brings us to daylight on the 13th. The following extracts relating to this period do not run satisfactorily in couples:

Lord Dundonald says in his Autobiography: "In obedience to this signal [that already mentioned, made by Admiral Stopford] the 'Valiant' 'Revenge' &c. at 4 a.m. got under weigh, having previously kindled the French line-of-battle ships 'Aquilon' and 'Ville de Varsovie,' an act for which there was not the slightest necessity, as they could easily have been got off."*

Captain Bligh of the 'Valiant,' said in his Evidence before the Court. "At half past three, the prisoners being moved from the 'Aquilon' and 'Ville de Varsovie,' and the water at that time *up to their orlop decks*, I ordered them to be set on fire."†

Again, *Lord Dundonald says in his Autobiography*: "As they were passing out, I hailed the 'Indefatigable,' and asked the captain if he would go on one quarter of the three-decker [l'Océan], whilst the 'Impérieuse' engaged the other. The

* Autobiography, p. 392. † Minutes, p. 160.

reply was, 'that he would not, and they were going out to join the fleet.'"*

Captain Rodd of the 'Indefatigable,' said in his Evidence before the Court: "Lord Cochrane hailed the 'Indefatigable' as we were passing along; but *what he said I could not distinctly make out.* I told him we were ordered out. He asked me, as well as I could understand him, if I had been aground. I replied, 'Yes.' He said, 'I should like to take your berth' (where we had been lying)."†

In his anxiety to condemn every order that did not proceed from himself, Lord Dundonald appears to have forgotten that the 'Calcutta,' was set fire to by a midshipman whom he himself sent on board her with discretionary orders.‡

Lord Dundonald affirms that on the 13th§ a signal of recall was hoisted from the 'Caledonia;' which signal, the signal-lieutenant of the 'Caledonia'‖ [Hockings] denies: whilst Sir Harry Neale and Lieutenant Hockings both affirm¶ that on the 14th the 'Impérieuse' signalled, "If permitted

* Autobiography, p. 392. † Minutes, p. 101.

‡ "He [Lord Cochrane] said that it was a thousand pities the 'Calcutta' was not brought off; but that he sent a young cur on board to use his own discretion, and that the boy set fire to her. . . I was not on the spot when she was fired; but Lord Cochrane told me she might have been brought off easily; also in the presence of his brother and others, on board his own ship.—*Evidence of Captain Bereeford. Minutes, p.* 168.

§ Autobiography, p. 393. Minutes, p. 61.

‖ Ibid, p. 181. ¶ Ibid. pp. 189, 192.

to remain can destroy the enemy;" which Lord Dundonald denies.*

Lord Gambier wrote to Lord Cochrane on the 13th to the effect that not wishing him to tarnish his fame by attempting impossibilities, and wishing to see him before closing the despatches, he desired that he would come out of Aix Roads as soon as the tide turned: that in the meantime Lord Cochrane might make an attempt with three brigs and two rocket-vessels then sent to join him; but that he, Lord Gambier, did not expect that anything could be effected with them.

This note Lord Dundonald charitably calls evasive; though, four pages farther on, after narrating his arrival on board the 'Caledonia,' and departure for England, he says that he acquits Lord Gambier "of all blame up to this period, except that of an easy disposition."

In reply to this note Lord Cochrane wrote to Lord Gambier, saying: "We can destroy the ships which are on the shore, which I hope your Lordship will approve of." In consequence of which Lord Gambier permitted him to remain, as stated in Lord Cochrane's own evidence.†

Nothing being effected, the 'Caledonia' hoisted on the 14th the first signal of recall made to the 'Impérieuse' since she anchored in Basque Roads,

* Minutes, p. 64. Autobiography, p. 395.

† Ibid, p. 64. Lord Cochrane's evidence.

on the 3rd of April. In reply to this the signal "If permitted to remain can destroy the enemy," was made by the 'Impérieuse.'

At the same time, Lord Cochrane received another note from Lord Gambier to the effect—that he [Lord Gambier] must see him before closing the despatches—that wishing him to convey Sir Harry Neale to England with those despatches, he had ordered Captain Wolfe, with the 'Aigle,' to relieve him in his present service—but that, instead of doing so, Lord Cochrane might, if he liked, return into Aix Roads after their interview.

This letter also Lord Dundonald attacks in the same strain, with how much justice the reader may judge from the data before him.

Captain Wolfe having been sent to relieve Lord Cochrane in command of the in-shore squadron, with a frigate of equal force* to the 'Impérieuse,' and full† powers by any means to effect the destruction of the enemy—and having, whilst in that anchorage, neither effected nor attempted anything—either Lord Cochrane must have erred in judgment when he telegraphed, on the 14th, that "if permitted to remain he could destroy the enemy;"‡ or the

* Minutes, p. 193. Sir H. Neale's evidence.

† Ibid, p. 67. Lord Cochrane's evidence.

‡ Ibid, p. 189. Lieutenant Hocking's evidence, also log of the 'Caledonia.' Sir H. Neale's evidence, p. 192.

alternative so affects Captain Wolfe's character, that one hesitates to put it into words. But, inasmuch as it stands recorded and uncontradicted, firstly, that Lord Cochrane, when *allowed to remain*, effected *nothing*—secondly, that Captain Wolfe, who relieved him with a frigate of equal force, effected nothing—thirdly, that Lord Cochrane did not, when applied to by Captain Wolfe for instruction, offer him any suggestion for the destruction of the enemy*—fourthly, that Lord Dundonald does not, either in his evidence before the Court-Martial, or in his Autobiography, impute to Captain Wolfe any neglect or failure of duty, of which he (Lord Dundonald) does not hesitate to accuse various other officers† of the fleet—fifthly, that the despatch which Lord Cochrane was recalled to convey, referred the Admiralty to him for all information beyond its limits—I know not how the conclusion can be escaped, not only that Lord Gambier was right in his judgment respecting the impossibility of doing anything further in Aix Roads, but that in his manner of acting thereupon, he manifested towards Lord Cochrane the kindliest courtesy and the most sincere anxiety for his reputation.

To return to the narrative: Lord Cochrane having come out of Aix Roads in the course of

* Minutes, p. 215.

† Minutes, p. 185, also Autobiography.

that day (the 14th), had an interview with Lord Gambier on board the 'Caledonia' and sailed for England the following day. Respecting the conversation that passed between himself and Lord Gambier on that occasion, it is necessary to remark, that the account given of it in the Autobiography is totally at variance with that sworn to by Lord Gambier's secretary, Mr. Wilkinson, who was present when it took place,* and whose evidence will presently be given.

After that period, nothing further was effected in Aix Roads; the French ships having, by throwing guns and stores overboard, got so far away that even gun-brigs grounded in attempting to reach them.† Lord Gambier, as already stated, sailed for England on the 29th.

All Lord Gambier's despatches referred to in the Autobiography are given either entire in the Defence, or in a short Appendix at the end of this volume; so that they may be at the reader's disposal for verification, without forcibly delaying him by superfluous matter.

I cannot however pass onward without noticing the following passage in the Autobiography. After sneering at Lord Gambier for beginning his first despatch with the words, "The Almighty's favour to His Majesty and the nation," Lord Dundonald adds in a note: "There is something very

* Minutes, p. 185.

† Minutes, p. 311, &c.

revolting to a truly religious mind in these derogatory phrases, which couple the beneficent Author of our being with the butcheries of war. Under no circumstances are they defensible, &c."* It is almost an impertinence towards the reader to suggest the self-evident reply that if war be justifiable before God, thanks to God for any success in war are *a fortiori* justifiable; whilst, on turning to precedents, we find such passages as the following.

From Lord Nelson's despatch after the battle of the Nile.

"Almighty God has blessed His Majesty's arms in the late battle by a great victory over the fleet of the enemy, &c."

From the General Order by Lord Nelson to the respective captains after the battle of the Nile.

"Almighty God, having blessed His Majesty's arms with victory, the Admiral intends returning thanksgiving for the same at two o'clock this day, and recommends every ship doing the same as soon as convenient."

From the General Order by Lord Collingwood after the battle of Trafalgar.

"The Almighty God, whose arm is strength, having of His great mercy been pleased to crown the exertions of His Majesty's fleet with success, in giving them a complete victory over their enemies on the 21st of this month, and that all

* Autobiography, p. 426.

praise and thanksgiving may be offered up to the throne of grace for the great benefits to our country and mankind, I have thought proper that a day of great humiliation before God and thanksgiving, &c."

Part of a letter from Rear-Admiral Sir J. Saumarez after a victory over a Spanish squadron, July 13, 1801.

"It has pleased the Almighty to crown the exertions of this squadron with the most decisive success over the enemies of their country, &c."

Lord Exmouth to the Secretary of the Admiralty after the Bombardment of Algiers.

"To have been the humble instruments in the hands of Divine Providence for bringing to reason a ferocious Government, for destroying for ever the insufferable and horrible system of Christian slavery, &c., &c."

Mr. James takes another and still more singular view of this matter. He does not abstractly object to thanksgivings for success in war; but, like a cabman to whom a "cove" has presented sixpence for a fare, considers that the amount obtained in Aix Roads "hardly warranted" the Commander-in-chief in expressing gratitude to Providence.* How far Mr. James is correct, by the by, in his off-hand account of the damage done to the French fleet will appear in a future page from evidence thereupon.

In their ideas of justice, both Mr. James and

* James's Naval History, vol. v. p. 127.

Lord Dundonald go upon Dogberry's principle—"Masters, I charge you in the Prince's name, accuse this man." Mr. James complains bitterly of what he calls "a bias in favour of the accused on the Court-Martial:" and Lord Dundonald is of opinion that Lord Gambier ought to have been found guilty because a sentence in his despatch of May 10th begins with the words, "Observing the 'Impérieuse' to advance and the time of flood nearly done running, the 'Indefatigable,' 'Unicorn' &c., were ordered by signal, in to the attack." "This," says Lord Dundonald, "ought to have decided any Court-Martial." In plain English—*because, after* having placed ships in readiness to go in to the attack,* Lord Gambier observed the 'Impérieuse' to advance nearly *about the time when he, Lord Gambier, judged it practicable to get those ships under weigh*—and *because* he takes this, as every other opportunity, of putting forward the services of Lord Cochrane in as favourable a light as possible to the Admiralty—*therefore*, he is proved guilty of neglect and delay.

In allusion to the words, "time of flood nearly done running," Lord Dundonald goes on to say:† "It is not very probable that, had Lord Gambier intended an attack, he would have let the flood-tide go by, without taking advantage of it in a channel which was afterwards declared unsafe

* Vide evidence given at p. 137 of this volume.

† Autobiography, p. 407.

from want of water." This is so complete a perversion of the grounds on which Lord Gambier acted in the matter, that I must again crave the reader's patience for an explanation which I will make as briefly as possible.

From about eight o'clock A.M. until three P.M. the tide was running the same way as the wind, which was blowing fresh and directly in;* so that no ship, being at all crippled in her masts, could have come out during that period—the wind and tide being dead against her—but must have remained exposed to the enemy's batteries.† The shortest application of this circumstance to the point at issue is contained in Captain Beresford's opinion, "that the proper time for sending ships in was at the time of tide that would insure their coming out in case of accidents;"‡ and is in fact the summary of Lord Gambier's reasons for not sending in the ships sooner than he did; viz. that the *ebb tide should enable them to float out,* the wind being, as it was during the whole of that day, dead against them.§ As the reader will perceive, the time thus designated by Captain Beresford coincides with the time indicated in the above-quoted sentence from the despatch—"the flood tide having nearly done running."

* Vide Minutes. Evidence of Mr. Stokes, Fairfax, &c.

† Minutes. Vide General Evidence.

‡ Minutes, p. 169.

§ Vide Minutes.

Lord Gambier timed his orders with such exactness, that the line-of-battle ships opened their fire just as the tide was turning, *i.e.* about three o'clock.* Had the wind been such as to enable ships to come up against the tide, Lord Gambier would have sent them in at eleven o'clock—the hour at which the fleet anchored, after standing in, and the 'Valiant,' 'Revenge' and 'Bellona' &c, took up their position near the Boyart shoal.

In support of his views, Lord Dundonald quotes a non-professional opinion—that of the Emperor Napoleon the First, who, according to Mr. O'Meara, appears to have thought that Lord Cochrane "could have taken them, [the French ships] out," as Gulliver served the Blefuscudians. Since a general is here taken as an authority in a question that turns upon soundings and the state of the wind and tide at a particular period, it may be as well to see whether Napoleon's great antagonist, the Duke of Wellington, said anything on the subject. And it opportunely chances that he did so—having been desired by the Government to give his opinion respecting the policy of landing troops on the island. A verified copy of the memorandum written by him thereupon was forwarded to Lord Gambier by the Admiralty in the month of March: which verified copy I find among Lord Gambier's papers.—The memorandum treats principally of landing-places on the Isle d'Aix, the

* Vide Minutes. General Evidence.

strength of the island, &c., &c. The summary of his opinion regarding a *naval* attack is—that by sending in "fire-vessels, and gun-boats drawing little water," the enemy would be "obliged to cut their cables and throw their guns overboard, and run in for the Charente." He adds: "I take it that that is the extent of what can be done at present."

The event proved that more was done than he expected. Not only were the enemy forced to cut their cables, though Lord Gambier had not a single gun-boat under his command, but British ships followed the enemy into Aix Roads, there inflicting the amount of damage which will presently be noticed. *Cæteris paribus,* Sir Arthur Wellesley's opinion, officially given, will surely balance the scale against a repeated fragment of Napoleon's conversation. I say *cæteris paribus,* because both were landsmen, both eventually the two great rivals in the final struggle of that long war, and neither witnessed the occurrences of which they severally speak hypothetically and retrospectively.

Napoleon, by Mr. O'Meara's account, further said that Admiral Allemand was an "imbécille;" while a French officer on board the 'Océan,' writing in the month of March to his sister, says: "Vice Admiral Allemand now commands, as *an officer well known for his activity.*"

Lord Dundonald next avails himself of an article

in the 'Times' of April 25, 1809, the writer of which, after premising that he wishes for information—not being conversant with naval matters, asks: "why the fleet had to be unmoored early on the morning of the 12th?" This question was subsequently answered on the Court-Martial by Mr. Stokes, master of the 'Caledonia,' thus: "I mentioned to Captain Bedford of the 'Caledonia,' at about seven in the evening [11th] the necessity of mooring the fleet, as they might swing on board of each other during the weather tide: he mentioned it to the Commander-in-chief, and the fleet was moored. The fleet could not act in the night; and to unmoor was only the business of about half an hour."*

As Lord Dundonald does not, either in his evidence or in his Autobiography, deny the necessity of this measure, it seems strange to find him pressing into the argument a question asked by a landsman for the sake of information, and afterwards answered in evidence.

The last authority appealed to in the Autobiography is that of Admiral Gravière, as thus expressed in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes:'—

"Un esprit de vertige semblait s'être emparé, dans cette affreuse nuit, et dans les journées qui suivirent, des plus braves capitaines. Des vaisseaux que l'ennemi n'avait pas même attaqués furent

* Minutes, p. 136.

abandonnés par leurs équipages, et des hommes héroïques partagèrent la faiblesse commune.

"La mollesse de Lord Gambier, le courage et le sang-froid de quelques uns de nos officiers, préservèrent seuls l'escadre français d'une ruine totale."

In other words, the *bravest* captains were frightened out of their wits; but the French fleet was nevertheless saved by the courage and presence of mind with which some of those captains profitted by the irresolution of the English Admiral.

This is certainly an ingenious manner of explaining away a defeat, and depriving the victors of the credit thereof, by means of a "vertige," the courage of the least brave among the captains, and an irresolute hostile commander. But in illustrating the effects of the "esprit de vertige," the writer is hard even to inaccuracy upon "les plus braves capitaines"—the 'Tourville' (Captain Lacaille) having been the only unattacked ship that was abandoned whilst a possibility remained of getting her off—as appears from contemporary accounts, both French and English.

Thus it may reasonably be doubted whether the unfortunate captain who suffered from "vertige" in Aix Roads, would have said with Lord Dundonald, that this was "the most honest account" they had seen.

CHAPTER X.

In naming the day on which the Court-Martial assembled, Lord Dundonald thus expresses himself: "After two months' delay, to enable Lord Gambier to get up his defence, a court-martial assembled," &c.*

This is incorrect. The interval was six weeks.

The charge was transmitted by the Admiralty to Lord Gambier on the 5th of June;† and the Court-Martial assembled on the 26th of July. Whether the Lords of the Admiralty sought to favour Lord Gambier by delaying the Court-Martial which he had asked them to assemble *as early as possible*,‡ may be gathered from the fact, that on the 5th of June Mr. Pole wrote to him, naming the 19th of the same month for the trial.

Whether Lord Gambier sought to delay, will best appear from his reply thereto,§ dated June 6th,

* Autobiography of a Seaman, p. 409.

† Vide despatch appended to Minutes, p. iv.

‡ Lord Gambier's letter of May 30. Minutes, p. iv.

§ Minutes, p. v.

in which he encloses a list of the names of the Rear-Admiral and captains commanding ships in Basque Roads; "leaving it to their Lordships to order *all or any part of them indiscriminately* to attend to give evidence." He adds, that he "shall be ready to meet the Court on the 19th instant, [June] if their Lordships shall be of opinion that they could select from the enclosed list the number sufficient to give evidence on the occasion."*

Whether his Defence was "got up" at all, the reader will judge when he comes to it, and finds it to consist of a few simple statements, with an occasional reference to that portion of the evidence which had been given previous to its delivery.

We must here notice, that Lord Dundonald, after having (by his own admission) threatened to oppose the vote of thanks—telling the first Lord of the Admiralty, at the same time, that Lord Gambier "had neglected to destroy the French fleet in Aix Roads when it was clearly in his power to do so"—complains that he was regarded as Lord Gambier's accuser by the Admiralty and the members of the Court-Martial. On his making known to Lord Mulgrave his intention of objecting to the vote of thanks, the Admiralty (as the reader knows) desired him to state the grounds of that objection, that they might make inquiries and act accordingly. This order Lord Dundonald calls "an attempt

* For the names of witnesses summoned see Minutes pp. v, vii.

to entrap him into the position of Lord Gambier's prosecutor."

The summary of his argument is: that because he threatened to oppose the vote of thanks, as a Member of Parliament, instead of forwarding charges as a naval officer, he ought to have been excused from all further explanations, and Lord Gambier quietly shelved without a hearing. Therefore, according to Lord Dundonald's principles of justice—an officer may traduce another officer in Parliament, from materials gathered whilst serving professionally under that officer's command, and then escape from all explanation, by pleading his privileges as a member. In other words, —A has one responsible calling; B has that and another also. B, whilst serving under A in that calling which is common to both, obtains the means of damaging A's character. He does so; but inasmuch as he does it while serving in that calling which is not common to both, A must, if required, lie still under the stigma which B may refuse either to remove or explain.

After first accusing Lord Gambier of the grossest neglect of duty, and then indignantly disclaiming the character of his accuser, Lord Dundonald finally complains that he was not allowed to cross-examine the witnesses. In plain language—an officer, being also a Member of Parliament, accuses another officer of having neglected his duty on a service in

which both were employed; the accuser then serving under the accused. This accusation he makes in his Parliamentary capacity; not forwarding charges professionally, but on the contrary, referring the Admiralty to the logs and signal-books of the fleet, when asked for the grounds of his accusation. The accused is tried by a court-martial at his own demand; and the accuser is summoned—not to maintain charges which he has not made professionally, and therefore, as far as regards the court-martial, not made at all—but to give professional evidence on matters to which he was professionally an eye-witness. Fifty-one years after, the accuser finds fault with the authorities for not desiring him to *cross-examine the other witnesses.*

Before proceeding to the Court-Martial itself, I must ask the reader's indulgence for two more statements relating thereto.

In allusion to Lord Gambier's despatch of May 10th, Lord Dundonald says: "The letter in question will be found at page 7 of the Minutes of a Court-Martial on Lord Gambier, taken in short-hand by Mr. W. B. Gurney,"* and as therein stated, revised by his Lordship. No such statement is made therein; and I can most positively, and from the authority of an eye-witness, inform the reader that the Minutes were printed off each day as soon

* Autobiography of a Seaman, vol. i. p. 407.

as the Court had closed. Moreover Lord Gambier never even saw them until after they were published.

The bias, predicated of the Court by Mr. James, requires a little further consideration than we were able to give it when noticing it in a former page; since he does not content himself with affirming that they evinced a strong bias, but openly accuses one of them of attempting to browbeat Lord Cochrane, and concludes by saying, that some of the "cross-examination would have done credit to a practioner of Westminster Hall."*

Sir Roger Curtis and Admiral Young are the two officers who especially incur Mr. James's displeasure, for no other reason, discoverable from a perusal of the Minutes, than this: That the former being President, and the latter rather a prominent member of the Court-Martial, neither suggested the propriety of condemning Lord Gambier first and trying him afterwards.

If I were to allow myself as much latitude in the use of private information as Mr. James does in that of broad assertions, the probabilities of the Court having even *felt* a bias in Lord Gambier's favour would assume very different proportions.

The quality of individual consciences is a matter open to dispute: not so the Minutes of a British Court-Martial. No one, I venture to state, can read with candour and attention the Minutes re-

* James's Naval History.

ferred to by Mr. James, and not feel that the stigma cast by him on the characters of the members in general, and the two above named in particular, is totally without foundation, Yet not so, perhaps, according to the principles of justice invoked by Lord Dundonald and Mr. James. Admiral Duckworth, having served under Lord Gambier as his second in command, may possibly have thought that the charge on which he was tried did not well agree with the general tenour of his professional conduct. If this amounts to a bias, then was he biassed. Sir Roger Curtis, having been Lord Howe's Flag-captain on the 1st of June—when the officer afterwards charged with delaying an attack broke through the French line with one 74, and single-handed successively engaged three and four ships of the enemy, certainly possessed the means of estimating probabilities as to the amount of "mollesse" to be expected from the officer so charged. If this amounts to a bias, then was he biassed also.

The amount of bias evinced by Admiral Young may be gathered from the following words addressed by him to Captain Seymour. Captain Seymour having declined* to give an opinion as to the propriety of sending in the two line-of-battle ships on the 12th sooner than they were sent in—adding, as a reason for so doing, that he was not

* Minutes, pp. 201, 202.

in possession of the Commander-in-chief's information, and had formed no judgment—Admiral Young endeavoured to remove his scruples by the following words: "It is quite within the capacity of any officer, serving under his command, to state any particular instance of misconduct: and *if you think* this of the two ships not going in so early as you think they might have floated, *is* an instance of *neglect* or *delay* in the commander-in-chief, *it is your duty so to state it.*"

I beg to submit to the reader whether this looks like evincing a bias in favour of the accused.

When we come to Lord Cochrane's evidence, the reader will form his own estimate of the brow-beating spoken of by Mr. James.

It may not, perhaps, be amiss to remark here, that the points on which Lord Gambier relied for acquittal of the charge preferred against him were quite different from those stated as such by Lord Dundonald.

Lord Dundonald's version is as follows: That Lord Gambier "rested for justification on three points: first, that had he sent in the fleet, its safety would have been endangered by the fortifications of Aix, (which he had previously spoken of as being dismantled); secondly, want of water to navigate the fleet in safety; and thirdly, from the fire of the enemy's vessels driven ashore (though lightened of their guns and stores)."

It is necessary to remark, that there are, in the above version of them, two or three very important suppressions and one distinct mis-statement of a statement distinctly made. Lord Gambier *never said* that the batteries on the Isle d'Aix were dismantled; but *distinctly named* those between the Isle d'Aix and Oléron as being so. This mis-statement has already been refuted in a former page.

Lord Gambier said in his Defence: that ships attacking at the time and in the manner proposed by Lord Cochrane in his evidence would have met with the following combined impediments; First, batteries on the Isle d'Aix; secondly, *the two ships afloat* ('Foudroyant' and 'Cassard'); thirdly, the *upright* ships aground; fourthly, shoal water under their lee. By the above the reader will perceive that in Lord Dundonald's account, the first of these is named, with the addition of the mis-statement already twice noticed—that the other is suppressed altogether—and that the meaning of the third and fourth is totally perverted. The fact is, that Lord Gambier's justification, from a charge so comprehensive as that of which he was accused, cannot be reduced either to three or four points. The only part of his Defence in which anything of the kind occurs, is just before the end, when he points to some general conclusions as having resulted from the evidence already before the Court. They may be briefly summed up thus: That the zeal displayed by him during the whole

service was on no occasion more conspicuous than on the 12th of April; and that such French vessels as were not destroyed were never in a position to be so by any means under his control.

Lord Dundonald brings forward the depositions of Captains Broughton, Malcolm, Seymour and Newcombe, as supporting his views: but it must be remarked, that they appear to have been injured on their passage from the Minutes to the Autobiography; as the marks of restoration are very visible. Being here in juxtaposition the reader can compare them.

Captain Broughton's Evidence as reported in the Autobiography of a Seaman.

"I was in Basque Roads in the 'Amelia' on the 17th of March, and when within gunshot of the Isle of Aix observed the fortifications as being under repairs, from the quantity of rubbish thrown up. I thought the fortifications on the island were not so strong as we supposed, and so reported to Lord Gambier. This was on the 1st of April. I did not notice any furnaces for heating red-hot shot. We *were just out of gunshot,* they *fired at us from both sides, but none reached us.*

"It would have been more advantageous if the line-of-battle ships, frigates, and small vessels had gone in at half flood, about eleven o'clock. There were nine sail ashore, and if the British ships had been ordered in, it would have been more advan-

tageous. There were only two of the enemy's ships at anchor, and the fleet, had it gone in, would have been exposed to their fire; but I conceived they were panic struck, and on the appearance of a force might have been induced to cut their cables and escape up the river. A ship or two might have been placed, in my opinion, against the batteries on the southern part of the Isle d'Aix, so as to take off their fire and silence them. I told Sir Harry Neale, on board the 'Caledonia,' when the signal was made for all captains in the morning, that they were attackable from the confused way in which the French ships were at the time, viz: from having run ashore in the night, in order to escape from the fire-ships which they imagined would explode."

"I think, as the wind was north-westerly and northerly, ships might have found safe anchorage in what is called, in my French chart, Le grand Trousse, where there is 30 or 40 feet of water out of the range of shot or shells in any direction. When we first came into Basque Roads, if the charts were to be believed, there was water enough in that position."*

"I do not know anything of any shoal water, I sounded from the wreck of the 'Varsovie' to that anchorage, and found no shoal there."

"Two ships of the line would have been sufficient

* Whether Captain Broughton was or was not correct on this point, the reader will presently judge from the evidence of other witnesses.

to silence the batteries of Aix, and five or six of the least draught of water to attack the enemy's ships. The discomfited French squadron would have made very little resistance. The loss would have been very little, as few of the ships were in a situation to fight their guns."

*Captain Broughton's Evidence as contained in the Minutes of the Court-Martial.**

"I was on board the 'Amelia,' when she was ordered to dislodge the enemy from the Boyart shoal, and being nearly within gunshot of the Isle d'Aix, observed the fortifications. I thought they were repairing the works from the quantity of rubbish thrown up, and *I counted on a semi-circular battery*, which *commanded the roadstead where the enemy lay, between* 18 *and* 20 *guns, I am not positive as to the exact nnmber*, there was a small battery lower down, nearer the sea. *I do not know* the exact number of guns, there might be 6 or 9. . . . . I thought from this observation, that the fortifications of the island *at least in that part*, were not so strong as we supposed; and I reported &c. . . . I am pretty certain it was the 1st of April. . . . Those were all the guns I observed. There might be more, I did not notice furnaces for heating shot. *Only subsequently from their throwing shells, we knew that the enemy had mortar batteries*, but it

* The important passages omitted in Lord Dundonald's version are here put in italics.

was supposed so at the time. It appeared to me that they were preparing and improving the old works. *The whole of the island appeared to be defended.* . I think it would have been more advantageous if the line-of-battle ships, frigates and small vessels had gone in at half flood, which I take to be about 11 o'clock..... I would rather say between 11 and 12.... I conceived they [the two French ships remaining at anchor] were partly panic-struck, and on the appearance of a force coming in, might have been induced to cut their cables and try to make their escape up the river.

"I think they [the British ships] would have suffered, but that a ship or two might have been placed, in my opinion, against the batteries on the southern part of the Isle of Aix, so as to take off their fire and silence them. I mentioned to Sir H. Neale &c..... that I thought they were attackable, speaking of the confused state in which the French ships appeared to be at the time.

"I think, as the wind was north-westerly and northerly, ships might have found safe anchorage in what is called, in my French chart, 'Le grand Trousse' where there is 30 or 40 feet of water out of the range of shot or shells in any direction. When we first came into Basque Roads, if the charts were to be believed, there was water enough in that position."

"*Q.—Are we to understand then that you would have recommended sending ships in against*

the batteries, &c., on a presumption that they must be silenced, without adverting to what would befall the ships in case they should not be silenced?

Captain B.—I did not give it that consideration at the time, &c. I do not know angthing of [shoal water between the Boyart and Palles] *whether there is or not.* I sounded from the wreck of 'Varsovie' to that anchorage, and found no shoal there.

President.—That is not the place, &c.

A.—I was not in-shore, and therefore cannot pretend to say, whether any practicable attempt was omitted for destroying the 'Océan,' &c.*

"How many would you have sent?"

"I should think that two [sail of the line] would be quite sufficient to silence the batteries, and five or six of the least draught of water, to attack the enemy's ships. I *conjecture* that the discomfited French squadron would have made very little resistance. *If the enemy had resisted, it is impossible to foresee what might have happened,*" &c.

Thus the summary of Captain Broughton's evidence is: that the shot from the Isle of Aix did not reach him when out of reach—that he duly reported this useful information to the Commander-in-chief—that, as far as he knew, no furnaces for heating shot were in use before the French had any suspicion of the fire-ships, for whose benefit they were designed—that he considered two sail

* Captain Broughton was not sent in at all into Aix Roads on the 12th.

of the line quite sufficient to silence those batteries which he had reconnoitred out of gun-shot, and the number of whose guns he did not know—but thought five or six requisite to silence the "discomfited French squadron," which he conjectured would have "made very little resistance," and that the fortifications appeared less strong to him, being out of range, than they did to Captain Kerr, when they cost that officer eighteen men killed and wounded, cut through five planks of his quarter-deck, carried away the quarter-deck beam, &c.

Evidence of Captain Pulteney Malcolm, of the 'Donegal,' as quoted in the "Autobiography of a Seaman."—I saw the enemy's three-decker on shore. Till about noon she was heeling over considerably, and appeared to me to be heaving her guns overboard. She got off about two o'clock. All the ships got off, except those that were destroyed. Had it appeared to me that there was no other chance of destroying those ships but by such an attack, I certainly think it ought to have been made. Had they been attacked by the British ships, in my opinion they could not have been warped off from the shore, as it was necessary so to do to lay out anchors to heave them off.

Q.—Would you, had you commanded the British fleet, have sent in ships to attack the enemy's ships on shore?

A.—The moment the two ships quitted their defensive position, the risk was then small, and, of course, I should have sent them in instantly."

Evidence of Captain Pulteney Malcolm, from the "Minutes."

Q.—Did you observe the enemy's three-decker on shore?

A.—Yes. Till about noon she was heeling considerably, and appeared to me to be heaving her guns overboard;* when she righted, she could have annoyed ships coming in.

Q.—What time did the three-decker remove from the situation in which you saw her on shore heeling?

A.—I cannot speak exactly to the time, but I should suppose about two o'clock. I cannot say whether it was before or after two o'clock, as I took no note of time.

Q.—Did any get off after that, and get into the Charente?

A.—No, none; they all got off except those that were destroyed.

Q.—And that was about the time that the three-decker got off?

A.—Yes; within half an hour one of another. I think that ships *on no account*, with propriety, could have been sent in to attack the enemy, till,

* From the intercepted letter of a French officer on board this ship, it appears that there were no guns thrown overboard until the 15th, when they had got higher up the Charente.

at least, half flood, which was about noon; and that sending them in afterwards, while the enemy remained upon the defensive, would have been attended with *very considerable* risk; because, *had they been disabled with the wind as it was, they could not have come out, but must have gone to the mouth of the Marmissour passage for anchorage.*

Q.—That is the passage between the Palles and the Boyart?

A.—Yes; which was ill understood. Had it appeared to me that there was no other chance of destroying those ships except by such an attack, I certainly think it ought to have been made. But it was understood that they must all again ground at the mouth of the Charente, where, it was the received opinion, they could be attacked with bombs, gun-vessels, and fire-ships again,* &c.

Q.—Had the French ships been attacked earlier, &c.?

A.—Had they been attacked by the British ships, in my opinion they could not have warped off from the shore, as it was necessary, so to do, to lay out anchors to heave them off. Those that were not aground had always the option of running further up the Charente; *but it should be understood, it must have been at the risk of our fleet, as I have already mentioned in a former answer.*

* The reader already knows why the fire-ships, prepared for this purpose on the 12th, could not be sent in. Vide Minutes.

Q.—At what time previous to that period?

A.—At about two P.M.

Q.—Would you, had you commanded the British fleet, have sent in ships to attack the enemy, &c.?

A.—The moment that the two ships quitted their defensive position, the risk was then small of sending ships, and, *of course, I would have sent them in instantly. The only thing I am in doubt about is the time. It was between the hours of one and two o'clock.* The bomb and brigs were sent in then; the 'Impérieuse' and 'Beagle' very soon followed. I should suppose in about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, the other ships' signals were made.

Q.—What other ships?

A.—I believe, all the frigates; and the 'Valiant' and 'Revenge' in, perhaps, less than that, &c.

Q.—What portion of time did there elapse, which could, *in any shape whatever*, be called delay in the Commander-in-chief in your judgment.

A.—I should not suppose above half an hour. It would have been a risk to have taken a line-of-battle ship into it [the Marmissour* Passage] with the knowledge I possessed, or which any of us (to the best of our knowledge) possessed. That was the risk of the undertaking, particularly if the

* Called elsewhere, 'La Grande Trousse.' Vide evidence of Captain Broughton, Mr. Stokes, &c.

ships were disabled. I do not believe any of the pilots had ever been there in large ships.

Q.—If disabled before slack tide, where could the ships have gone?

A.—They must have remained until slack tide, and continued the action."

From Captain Malcolm's evidence, when seen in its original condition, it appears that when much pressed by the President to find out a portion of time which could *in any shape whatever* be called delay in the Commander-in-chief, he named *half an hour*. Lord Dundonald, standing upon the position that the attack should have been made soon after daylight, calls this evidence "pretty decisive"—*as in truth it is.*

In the Autobiography, the paragraph quoted from Captain Newcombe's evidence appears minus the clause required to make it intelligible. The clause lost in the passage I have added in italics.

Evidence of Captain F. Newcombe (of the 'Beagle') from the Autobiography.

Q.—Can you state any instance of neglect, misconduct, or inattention, in the proceedings of the Commander-in-chief, between the 11th and 18th?

Ans.—None, save and except, had the Commander-in-chief thought proper, from his situation to have sent in vessels earlier than they were sent, though there might be a great risk in so doing,

there was a possibility of annoying the enemy more than they were annoyed. *But our ships must be subjected, nevertheless, not only to the fire of the enemy's ships that remained at anchor, but also to the fire from the batteries in Isle d'Aix.*"

No one denied the possibility of annoying the French ships more by an earlier attack. The question turned upon the attacking force being disabled by the batteries and ships mentioned in the last clause, and left in that condition until slack tide—as deposed by Captain Malcolm in his "pretty decisive" evidence.

Captain Newcombe being one of the four officers to whose testimony Lord Dundonald appeals as favouring his views, I subjoin a few more passages from the evidence of that officer.

Evidence of Captain Newcombe from the "Minutes."

Q.—At the time you were there, were any of the ships that afterwards escaped up the Charente within reach of being destroyed by your shot.

Captain Newcombe.—No.

Q.—By the damage you observed the enemy's ships to have sustained from the attack you have now detailed, was it your opinion that a repetition of such an attack would have destroyed them, or would have prevented their getting up the Charente?

A.—By no means; because vessels of the description that made the attack that I have now

detailed could not, with any propriety, advance farther; but had there been a few bomb-vessels with some gun-boats, it is very probable that the enemy might have been more annoyed on the day after; but this class of vessels was not with us.

Q.—If the British ships had been sent earlier in, would they have been subject to annoyance from the French ship 'Océan,' as well as the two French ships remaining at anchor, and the batteries, &c.?

A.—I think they would.

Q.—Suppose the English ships had been sent in at eleven o'clock, and received material damage, &c., how long must they have remained under fire, &c. of the French ships and batteries before they could have come out again &c.?

A.—For a considerable time. Large ships must have backed and filled out with a strong ebb, and even then be subject to the fire from the Isle d'Aix as well as shells from the Island of Oléron; and if any unfortunate chance shot had crippled her masts and yards, there was every probability of her being destroyed altogether.

Q.—From the first attack on the ships of the enemy, was there everything done that was practicable to destroy the enemy's ships?

A.—I think there was, considering all the circumstances I have stated.

Captain Newcombe, then, being the third wit-

ness produced in the Autobiography, considered the risk of an earlier attack too great with the wind as it was—*this opinion being precisely that stated by Lord Gambier in his Defence.*

The fourth witness produced in the Autobiography is Captain Seymour of the 'Pallas,' 36 gun frigate.

By comparing this officer's evidence, as quoted in the Autobiography, with the corresponding passages from the Minutes, the reader will perceive that his meaning has been totally obscured by the omission of dates and consolidation of three distinct depositions. In the former, Captain Seymour is made to express that had Lord Gambier attacked the French ships earlier on the 12th, more would have been destroyed, as the British ships floating in with the last half of the flood-tide would have prevented the enemy from carrying out hawsers; whereas, in fact, he bears record to a signal made on the 14th by Lord Cochrane (which signal the latter denies having made), and with regard to the 12th, only says that ships could have floated in sooner than they did—which nobody doubted.

Evidence of Captain George Francis Seymour (of the 'Pallas') as quoted in the "Autobiography."

Captain Seymour.—"I saw the 'Impérieuse' inform the Commander-in-chief by signal, that, if allowed to remain, he could destroy the enemy; there was every prospect of preventing them from

getting off, as it would prevent their carrying out hawsers to heave off by. From what I afterwards saw, I think the ships might have floated in sooner —they might have come in with the last half of the flood-tide.

Q.—How much sooner would that have been than the time they actually did go in?

A.—At eleven o'clock.

Q.—What time did the line-of-battle ships go in?

A.—Within a short time after two o'clock.

Q.—Is your opinion formed from information obtained since the 12th of April, or on that day?

A.—It was formed from the depth of water we found on going in. It is impossible for me to foretell the event of such an attack, it so much depending on fortuitous circumstances. I cannot say that the line-of-battle ships should have gone in; I was not in possession of the Commander-in-chief's information.

I state the fact and leave the Court to judge. I mean to say there would have been water enough for the line-of-battle ships to have floated in. As to the opposition they would have met with, the Court has as much before them as I have."

Evidence of Captain G. F. Seymour from the "Minutes."

Q. Did you on the 14th see the 'Impérieuse'

inform the Commander-in-chief by signal, that "if allowed to remain he could destroy the enemy?"

Ans. I did.

Q. Had any plan been concerted between the Captain of the 'Impérieuse' and yourself for destroying the enemy's ships?

Ans. None. *I heard Lord Cochrane express his opinion* that by throwing shells at the ships at spring-tide, towards high water, there was every prospect of preventing the enemy's getting off, as it would prevent their carrying out hawsers to heave off by.

The whole of the commanding officers appeared to be actuated by the same spirit, and I saw nothing like failure of duty in any vessel whatever.

From what I afterwards saw, I think the ships might have floated in sooner on the 12th—they might have come in with the last half of the flood-tide.

Q. Was that impression upon your mind at the time?

Ans. No, it was not certainly.

Q. How much sooner would that have been than the time they actually did go in?

Ans. At eleven o'clock.

Q. What time did the line-of-battle ships go in?

Ans. Within a short time after two o'clock.

Q. Is your opinion founded from information obtained since the 12th of April, or on that day?

Ans. It was formed from the depth of water we found on going in.

Q. From the time of the first attack, &c., until the departure on the 27th April, &c., was there, to the best of your judgment, everything done that was practicable to be done for effecting the destruction of the enemy's ships.

Ans. Everything.

I myself doubt whether line-of-battle ships would have been successful or unsuccessful in doing good by going in.

I meant to say, it is a point on which the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief might be fairly used. *It is impossible for me to foretell the events of such an attack, it so much depending on fortuitous circumstances.*

Q. Did you think that the line-of-battle ships should have gone in?

Ans. I cannot give an opinion upon that. I was not in possession of the Commander-in-chief's information, and had formed no judgment, not having information that would allow me to form any judgment as to the propriety of it.

I have already stated that I cannot say it was misconduct. I state the fact, and leave the Court to judge. *I confine myself to the meaning of the words, that there would have been water enough for the line-of-battle ships to have floated in,* that is all I mean to say. The opposition they would have

met with, the Court have as much before them as I have. There were two sail of the line lying in the passage, and *I was not acquainted with the state of the batteries on the Isle d'Aix.*

Q. Admiral Sutton. You have stated that the 'Impérieuse' made *a signal on the 14th,* "If allowed to remain can destroy the enemy." Did it appear to you that the signal was pointed to any particular operation which you observed, at that moment, practicable to be made on the enemy's ships?

Ans. No, more to their general annoyance."

Thus Lord Dundonald, standing upon the position that the line-of-battle ships should have been sent in soon after day light, backs his opinions by the evidence of a witness, who *not being acquainted with the state of the batteries, doubted* whether ships would have been successful had they even gone in at eleven o'clock.

The above named witness, Captain Seymour, is the fourth and last witness to whom Lord Dundonald appeals in his Autobiography.

The evidence of Sir Harry Neale is referred to, not quoted, by Lord Dundonald. It appearing from the Autobiography that the witness in question was silenced by the Court, it may not be amiss to examine the Minutes on the subject.

Before taking the oath, Sir Harry Neale addressed the Court to the effect that he wished to

know whether he was bound by that oath to relate private communications with the Commander-in-chief, or only to answer the questions put to him. He added, "I take the liberty of asking that, because I stand in a peculiar situation with the Commander-in-chief." Sir Roger Curtis replied, "I apprehend myself—if the Court differ from me they will state it—that you are not called upon to relate private conversations you had with the Commander-in-chief in your intimate and peculiar situation." Admiral Young said that a specific question required only a specific answer; but that an order to detail circumstances was of course an order to detail all that the witness knew about them. I should not have mentioned Admiral Young's very self-evident definitions, were they not called, in the Autobiography, "one of the strangest injunctions which ever fell from the lips of a judge."

Lord Dundonald appears to be dissatisfied with the Court for not questioning this witness more extensively; though what further questions could have been put to him it is not easy to imagine. First Captain of the 'Caledonia'—he was, *ipso facto*, not in Aix Roads during the operations there; and therefore could give no practical information on the questions already answered by Admiral Stopford and Captains Beresford, Bligh, Kerr, &c.

The confidential friend of the Commander-in-chief —was he just the man to satisfy the Court by giving

his opinion on the general question of neglect or delay?

After being caused to infer that Sir Harry Neale was prevented by the Court from making important revelations prejudicial to Lord Gambier's cause, the reader of the Autobiography is finally told that one or two "leading questions" were put, but is left to guess what they were. As those questions lead in a direction totally opposite to that pointed out in the Autobiography, it may be as well to supply the omission.

Sir Harry Neale said in Evidence: "I was conversing with Lord Cochrane about the 6th of April, respecting the distance that the British fleet was anchored from the French fleet. His Lordship stated that the fleets were nine miles from each other. I replied that they were only six. It had been ascertained by angles, as well as by cross-bearings upon the chart. His Lordship replied the chart was not to be depended upon. I was speaking of a French chart. I had marked the situation of the fleet upon the French chart.

Q.—Did it happen to be what is called the 'Neptune Francais'?

A.—That was what I was speaking of. His Lordship said that the French were in the habit of giving a smaller space upon their charts than was true.

Q.—What number of furnaces for heating shot did Lord Cochrane report that he had observed?

A.—He reported to me on his return from reconnoitering, I think on the 5th of April, that he had seen eighteen hundred men, and five furnaces at that time.

Lord Gambier.—Under the peculiar circumstances in which Sir Harry Neale stands as my confidential friend and first Captain of the 'Caledonia,' I do not think it proper to ask him any further questions."

CHAPTER XI.

On the 26th of July the Court-Martial assembled on board the 'Gladiator,' in Portsmouth Harbour, being composed of

ADMIRAL SIR ROGER CURTIS, BART. (*President.*)
„ WILLIAM YOUNG.
VICE ADMIRAL SIR J. T. DUCKWORTH, K.B.
„ SIR H. E. STANHOPE, BART.
„ BILLY DOUGLAS.
„ G. CAMPBELL.
REAR-ADMIRAL JOHN SUTTON.
CAPTAIN JOHN IRWIN.
„ ROBERT HALL.
„ E. S. DICKSON.
„ R. D. DUNN.

The evidence of Captains Broughton, Malcolm, Newcombe, Seymour, and Sir Harry Neale has been already treated. The depositions of the two signal-officers (Lieutenant Hockings and Mr. Sparshot) are omitted for the same reason. Messrs. Dyer and Thomson only verified, the former Lord Mulgrave's handwriting, the latter the 'Beagle's' log. Mr. Spurling, the master of the 'Impérieuse,' deposed to having discovered the anchorage* taken up by that ship on the morning of the 13th. He likewise produced her log, respect-

* Mentioned elsewhere as the Marmissour Passage, La Grande Trousse, &c.

ing which Admiral Stanhope said; "I cannot help observing that there appear to have been some very important omissions, which are afterwards entered in several parts—several very material circumstances."

This witness acknowledged that he had gone on board the 'Indefatigable' in the month of May, for the purpose of making a memorandum from that ship's log, which he said was merely to satisfy his own mind how long she had been in action—and that, on attempting to do so, he was prevented by the first lieutenant.

Résumé of the Minutes of the Court-Martial.

In order to avoid wearying the reader by a useless lengthening of the evidence, I have amalgamated the questions with the answers as much as possible; but the reader will see, by referring to the published Minutes, that I have not altered the meaning in the slightest degree. For the same reason, I have also endeavoured to avoid, as much as possible, the repetition of statements made by several witnesses in nearly the same words; and some parts of the evidence are not quoted in this chapter, because they either have been or will be noticed in another.

The evidence is given in the following order:—

Captain Lord Cochrane of the 'Impérieuse' frigate.

Mr. Stokes, Mr. Raven } Masters of the 'Caledonia' and 'Cæsar.'

Mr. Fairfax, Master of the Fleet.

Capt. Bligh, of the 'Valiant,' line-of-battle ship.
Capt. Kerr, of the 'Revenge,' line-of-battle ship.
Capt. Beresford, of 'Theseus,' line-of-battle-ship.
Rear Admiral the Hon. R. Stopford, ['Cæsar,' line-of-battle ship.] Second in Command.
} Sent in to the attack on the 12th.

Captain Wolfe, of the 'Aigle,' frigate.
Capt. Rodd, of the 'Indefatigable,' frigate.
Capt. Hardyman, of the 'Unicorn,' frigate.
Capt. Godfrey, of the 'Etna,' bomb-vessel.
} Also sent in to the attack on the 12th.

Mr. Wilkinson, Secretary to the Commander-in-chief.
Captain Douglas, of the 'Bellona,' line-of-battle ship.
Captain Newman of the 'Hero' line-of-battle ship.
Captain Ball, of the 'Gibraltar,' line-of-battle ship.
Captain Burlton, of the 'Resolution,' line-of-battle ship.

I first give the abstract of Lord Cochrane's evidence, as a point of comparison for the rest. The substance of the opinions therein expressed is already before the public in the 'Autobiography of a Seaman;' but the reader will, I think, prefer to have the points at issue in Lord Cochrane's own words, and examine the nature of the browbeating affirmed by Mr. James.

Captain Lord Cochrane ('Impérieuse'), examined.

President.—Does it appear to your Lordship that the Admiral gave every possible assistance in his power towards carrying into effect such propositions as your Lordship made to him, for preparing, arranging, and sending the fire-ships against the enemy?

Lord Cochrane.—Every possible assistance, as well as Admiral Stopford, and the captains of the fleet.*

* I transcribe this question and answer, because, in the Au-

Q.—Were the frigates and other small vessels, which were advanced previous to the attack of the 11th, properly placed by the Commander-in-chief, for affording the most effectual assistance, or being otherwise useful in the service to be performed?

A.—Very judiciously placed.

Q.—It appearing by the signal-log of the 'Caledonia,' and other logs, that you made the following communications to the Commander-in-chief, on the morning of the 12th, 5.48 A.M.:—"Half the fleet can destroy the enemy; seven on shore;"—"6.40, eleven on shore;"—"7.40, only two afloat;"—"9.25, enemy preparing to haul off;"—was it your Lordship's opinion, at the time of making the first-mentioned signal, that it would have been expedient for the Commander-in-chief to send in half, or any of the ships-of-the-line, to effect the purpose of destroying the enemy's ships, considering the state of wind and tide at that time, and the shoal-water in the inner harbour; and if so, was there a probability, in your Lordship's judgment, that such ships could have got off again in safety?

A.—The 'Impérieuse,' being the nearest ship, placed by his Lordship for the guidance of the fire-ships, and having had the charge of those vessels, I thought it proper to communicate to his Lordship the state in which they appeared to me, *which I did by the signal mentioned in the question.*

Lord Cochrane made this answer, looking all the time at a paper in his hand.

President.—Is it not usual, when minutes are referred to by a witness, to ask whether they were made at the time, or subsequently from reflection?

biography, the terms "extraordinary hesitation," "jealousy," and "ill-feeling" are copiously applied to the captains of the fleet.

Judge-Advocate.—Certainly. When did your Lordship make these minutes?

Lord Cochrane.—They are observations made at the time, which I am willing to swear to.

President.—I only ask for the correctness of proceeding, according to the usages of Courts-Martial, not with a view to reflect on your Lordship.

Lord Cochrane.—So I understand.

Judge-Advocate.—This is not the original paper, but a copy?

Lord Cochrane.—It is a copy of the minutes I made at the time, the log-books of the ship will show; but as to the circumstances, I am perfectly correct.

Judge-Advocate.—The original your Lordship has?

Lord Cochrane.—The original I do not recollect whether I have, but Lord Mulgrave desired to have the log of the 'Impérieuse,' and I gave him this, not in my own hand-writing, but written by a clerk.

Judge-Advocate.—How long after the action was that copy made?

Lord Cochrane.—This copy was made in London, but it was made from the notes I made at the time.

Admiral Stanhope.—Lord Cochrane swears that all which he now states is correct; therefore I do not think it is material where it comes from.

Q.—It appearing by the log-book of the 'Impérieuse,' that you, having previously sent a boat and buoyed the channel into the inner road of Aix, weighed at half past eleven, A.M., on the 12th of April, and ran into the harbour, in company with the 'Etna,' bomb and gun-brig, &c.; did you weigh and advance towards the evening by

signal from the Commander-in-chief, or did you do so without orders?

A. I think it necessary, if I am permitted by the Court, to read, in answer to this question, remarks that I threw together in consequence of a letter I received from the Secretary of the Admiralty.

President.—I do not know what may be the opinion of the Court, but it appears to me that the more regular course would be for Lord Cochrane to answer that question, if it is in his power to do so, not by reference to any correspondence he had with any other person, but what is the conviction in his Lordship's mind.

Judge-Advocate.—I was only waiting till his Lordship had finished what he had to say, to observe that, if that minute was made at a considerable distance of time after the transactions, he cannot refer to it. Certainly the rule is, that whenever persons shall have committed to paper, immediately, or within a day or two after the transactions, he is permitted to look at those memorandums; but if made at a distance of time, when it is possible that they may not have been made so correctly as if written a day or two afterwards, it is the constant practice to refuse the witness even to look at these memoranda.

President.—I never, in all my experience, knew the document of a witness permitted to be received when he was himself present to be examined.

The first part of the question was read over to Lord Cochrane, that he weighed in company with the 'Etna' bomb, &c., at 11.30 A.M.

A. No, that is not correct; it was one o'clock.

Judge-Advocate.—Then that entry in the 'Impérieuse's' log-book is not correct?

A.—It is not correct by any means.

Admiral Stanhope.—Here are two log-books produced in Court. I want to know whether it is understood that the Captain has a log-book distinct from the ship's log, and if so, which is to be taken to be correct, for Lord Cochrane states that he will not answer for the correctness of the ship's log.

Judge-Advocate.—He goes further, for he says it certainly is not correct.

President.—And that is *what is sworn to by the master.*

Lord Cochrane.—It will probably appear, by the log-books of the fleet, that I weighed at one o'clock. The 'Etna' rather preceded us.

Mr. Bicknell.—(Solicitor for the Prosecution). It appears also, by the logs before the Court, that you made the following communication to the Commander-in-chief on the same day. "At 1.30 P.M., enemy's ships getting under sail; at 1.40, enemy superior to chasing ship, but inferior to the fleet; at 1.45 in distress, and in want of immediate assistance."

Lord Cochrane.—These signals I must explain, because I really did not intend to make such signals.

President.—That explanation will, of course, form part of your answer.

Judge-Advocate.—The question grounded upon this is, what was the nature of the distress of your ship, and did any and what frigates come to your assistance, and was there any unnecessary delay in that respect?

Lord Cochrane.—I enquired, by hailing the 'Etna' bomb, what attack was meant to be made upon the enemy. The commander replied he was ordered to bombard them.

I directed him to go close, and that we should protect them. It was then one o'clock. The French three-decker swung to her hawsers, and the last of their ships began to move. *I had the charge of the fire-ships, which had failed of their expected purpose.* I knew what the tongue of slander was capable of, and though I admit that the feelings of my Lord Gambier for the honour and interest of his country were and are as strong as my own, yet personal considerations were enough; the expectations of my country—the hopes of the Admiralty—and my own prospects were about to vanish.

Judge-Advocate.—I am very sorry to interrupt the proceedings of the Court, but having spoken of the paper his Lordship has in his hands, I must beg to have the opinion of the Court whether he may refer to it or not. I am guided only by a sense of my duty. . . . How long afterwards did your Lordship make these notes?

A.—In June.

Admiral Young.—There appears to be a peculiar impropriety in that which is at all times improper, that those notes should be used, &c., which were made at the time that his Lordship knew for certain they were to be used in the bringing his Commander-in-chief to trial.

Judge-Advocate.—These notes made in June, and the transaction being in April, it is contrary to all law that they should be used.

Admiral Young.—The Court must be satisfied with his Lordship giving (which they know he will do) all the facts within his knowledge.

Admiral Stanhope.—I think in the letter written by Lord Cochrane to the Admiralty, in answer to their application for information, &c., his Lordship does nothing but

refer them to the log-books of the fleet, &c. After this, my Lord Cochrane having noticed that a court-martial is to take place, commits to paper such things as he thinks it right to state, &c., under any circumstances improper, most especially when connected with that letter.

Lord Cochrane.—If my log is put into my hand, I can equally answer. This is all from the log. (Lord Cochrane's log was handed to him.)

Judge-Advocate.—These, I understand, are copies also; when were they made?

A. They are all copied from notes I made at the time.

Q. Has your Lordship the possession of those notes?

A. It was principally from the copy of the ship's log, corrected by my own notes.

SECOND DAY.

Examination of Lord Cochrane continued.

Mr. Bicknell.—Did it appear to your Lordship that there was any unnecessary delay on the part of the Commander-in-chief, on the morning of the 12th of April, when your Lordship made the signal "that half the fleet could destroy the enemy's ships," till the 'Impérieuse' and other frigates went into the attack of the enemy's ships on the afternoon of that day?

Lord Cochrane.—Yes; when I expressed by signal to the Commander-in-chief, shortly after daylight in the morning, that part of the British fleet was enough to effect the destruction of the enemy, there being only two sail of the line capable in any degree to resist an attack, I did expect that an endeavour would have been immediately

made to dislodge these two ships from the situations in which they remained, by an attack by two or three sail of the line, which were quite sufficient for that purpose. *The tide and wind were from daylight in the morning until past eight o'clock both going the same way;* and ships of the line, by passing near to the Boyart, and putting their helm alee, their fore and main-top sails being to the mast, would have brought their heads towards the north-east, which would have enabled them, at a distance at which the shot of Aix would have been of no effect, to have brought all their guns to bear upon the enemy's two ships.

President.—Which two ships do you now allude to?

The two which still remained at anchor (they are marked in the chart which I have given in to the Court); until they approached them, or until so far down to leeward that they would have been enabled, by *putting their helms up, to run under their sterns between them and the ships on shore,* and thereby capture them, or force them to cut and run aground likewise, and then effect both their destruction and the destruction of the other vessels which were on shore, and which I have already stated might have been destroyed by the endeavours, in my opinion, of two sail of the line, aided by the frigates, at any period previous to half-past eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the 12th of April, and by the frigates alone before one o'clock, when the French three-decker swung to her hawsers, and when the last of their ships began to float, I speak of the line-of-battle ships; some of the frigates did not float, for the two ships which had remained at anchor, and cut on the approach of the British fleet, had also grounded, there not being, even at twelve o'clock, at half-tide, water

enough for them to effect their escape up the middle of the channel of the River Charente.

President.—What was the tide—an ebb-tide or a flood-tide, on the morning of the 12th?

Lord Cochrane.—The ebb-tide was running twenty minutes past eight o'clock. The ebb-tide runs out towards the north-west.

Q.—How was the wind?

A.—The wind was about north-west.

Q.—Then how could the wind and tide be running the same way?

A.—I talk of after ten o'clock.

Q.—*President.*—Then there is a little obscurity, not in your representation, but in my comprehension I dare say; I think you had better make that more distinct.

A.—I have expressed it here—till past eight o'clock.

Q.—The wind and tide were going *contrary ways* till past eight o'clock?

A.—From eight o'clock till twelve they were running the same way. I think it was twenty minutes after eight that it turned. The tide and wind were from eight to twelve running the same way.

The Judge-Advocate read the rest of Lord Cochrane's answer.

Judge-Advocate.—By "till half-past eleven o'clock" you mean from ten till half-past eleven two sail of the line and the frigates could have destroyed the French ships?

Lord Cochrane.—I mean at any period after day-light.

Q.—If the frigates alone could do it after eleven, why could they not do it before?

Lord Cochrane.—At eleven o'clock the British fleet

weighed and stood towards the enemy, whereupon their two ships, which continued still at anchor, cut and ran aground; the British fleet brought up about half-past eleven o'clock. I was ignorant what my Lord Gambier's plans might be, and though I concluded that the fires for cooking had long previously been out, yet I imagined that this might possibly have been (I mean the anchoring) to give the seamen something to eat and drink.

Q.—Really I very humbly beg your pardon, but I do not see how this can be an answer?

Lord Cochrane.—If when it is written it shall appear not an answer to the question, then I humbly submit it may be struck out.

Admiral Young.—Yes, but if the Court is of opinion that their time is taken up with anything not relevant, they may, I apprehend, stop it.

A.—I apprehend that cannot be seen, until the Court see what it is I am about to say. I will, if the Court will permit me, finish what I have to say: To give the seamen something to eat and drink previous to going into action; and though I regretted the time that appeared in my mind to have been already lost, as well as what we were evidently losing, by even half-an-hour's delay, in making some kind of attack, by a couple of sail of the line, or by the frigates only; yet I consoled myself by the supposition that his Lordship intended a grand blow on the island and on the ships at once, although I thought this neither necessary in order to effect their destruction, or prudent with the whole fleet; I could not in any other way account for a proceeding that thus enabled the helpless French ships to endeavour to make their escape undisturbed into the River Charente; twelve o'clock arrived,

no signal was made to weigh anchor; half-past twelve still no signal—

Admiral Young.—This is really very improper; this has no sort of connection whatever with the question which is asked, and is only a series of observations to the disadvantage of the prisoner.

The question was again read over at Lord Cochrane's desire.

A.—The reasons, if *there are any,* why the frigates might not, previous to the hour of half-past eleven o'clock, have attacked the enemy, will be found in the preceding narration, wherein it appears that two sail of the line still continued at anchor until the hour of half-past eleven o'clock; which two ships, it appeared to my mind, it would have been better to attack by opposing to them two or three sail of the line, instead of a greater number of frigates, although it was my opinion that the frigates themselves would have been quite equal to the task."

Respecting the charts and soundings Lord Cochrane gave the following evidence:

President.—When did your Lordship first discover that, in the inner road of Aix or of Basques, there was anchorage sufficiently capacious to contain six sail of the line to ride out of range of shot or shell?

A.—I had been in possession of the French charts, which I have not found to be defective in any material point, for a period of years; and from those charts I had at all times drawn my conclusions with respect to the depth of water, &c. I knew by the chart that, when in pursuit of the 'Calcutta,' I was to find a bank; I found it and anchored upon it, and this I did knowing what I was about.

Admiral Young.—Was the bank the anchorage?

A.—I could not get so close as I was desirous of going.

Q.—When you found by experience, upon going into Aix Roads, that the soundings were correctly laid down in the chart you made use of, &c., that there was safe anchorage* for six sail of the line, did you make any communication of that important fact to the Commander-in-chief?

A.—The Commander-in-chief had the same charts, I believe, as I was in possession of. . . He had also French pilots on board, upon whose reports, from previous experience, I knew the Commander-in-chief to rely above all other authority. In reconnoitering the fleet the first day, when so near as to induce the enemy to open a fire from almost his whole line, I reported to the Commander-in-chief the ruinous state of the Isle d'Aix, it having the inner fortifications completely blown up and destroyed. There were only thirteen guns mounted.

Admiral Young.—Will you consider, my Lord Cochrane, before you go on, how far this is relevant?

A.—In making these observations to his Lordship for his information, he stated his perfect reliance on the opinion of the pilots, and assured me that the Isle d'Aix was exceedingly strong, and that, I think, it had three tiers of guns mounted towards the shipping, and I said to his Lordship, as well as to Sir Harry Neale, that I never yet had a pilot—

President.—Lord Cochrane states this as his reason for not taking a particular line of conduct?

A.—I have felt that if I had answered 'yes' or 'no' to all the questions which have been put to me, I ought to be hung—

* Mentioned elsewhere as 'La Grande Trousse.'

Judge-Advocate.—I believe nobody has desired your Lordship to answer merely 'yes' or 'no.'

A.—I answered that I never yet knew a pilot, particularly a French pilot, who did not find a shoal wherever there was a gun, &c.

Admiral Young.—It would seem, from a part of the answer, that your soundings to discover the position for six sail of the line was after the burning of the enemy's ships?

A.—By the soundings which I made, I was only confirmed in my opinion of the correctness of the French charts; ours are abominable, and not fit to be delivered out.

Admiral Young.—Can ships arrive at that anchorage* at all times of the tide?

A.—I do believe, as I have already stated, that ships of the line may pass in at any time of the tide. I sat upon the netting attending the lead during the time we were going in. It was then high water, and having remarked that the rise and fall of the tide was stated at, I think, about *ten feet upon that chart,* the impression upon my mind was, that I should not, with a ship of the line, hesitate to go in.†

Q.—All the information your Lordship has of the rise and fall of the water [tides] was obtained from the charts only, and without any soundings or experience of your own?

A.—I had remarked when cruising before upon that coast the rise and fall [of the tides] about Sable d'Olonne, which is not far distant, to be about ten or twelve feet. It was stated to me there, that it was not above ten or twelve feet at the highest tides."

* La Grande Trousse, mentioned by Captain Broughton, Mr. Stokes, &c.

† See evidence of Mr. Stokes on the rise of the tide in Aix.

Mr. Stokes, Master of the 'Caledonia' examined. Concerning the wind on the 12th of April.

From daylight in the morning until 10 a.m., N.N.W.
From 10 to 12, N.N.W. to N.N.E.
From 12 to 3, N.N.E. to N.N.W., rather varying.
From 3 to 5, N.N.W. to N.W.
High spring tide in Aix Roads at 3 o'clock on the 12th.

Rise of the Tide in Basques Roads.

Mr. Stokes.—The lead was hove and *depth of water carefully ascertained every half an hour on board the 'Caledonia,'* from the time she anchored off Chasseron till she anchored in Basques Roads, and from that time until, I believe, the day she quitted the station, whereby we ascertained, beyond *all manner of doubt, the actual rise of the water in Basque Roads*—19 feet spring tide, 8 feet dead neap.

Rise of the Tide in Aix Roads.

Mr. Stokes.—The rise of the tide in Aix Roads is 21 *feet in high spring tide:* more than in Basques Roads—the channel being more confined.

Strength of the current of the Tide.

Q.—Was it so strong as to prevent fast sailing ships from working over it, and beating out against the flood?

Mr. S.—The flood-tide in the springs ran at least three knots an hour, therefore it was impossible for any ship to work out against that tide. Any ships going in at the end of the ebb must necessarily remain during the whole of the flood.

Q.—You have said that if any ships of the line had gone into Aix Roads on the morning of the 12th, they could not possibly get out again that day?

Mr. Stokes—They could not. It was my opinion on the morning of the 12th, and I have never had any reason

to alter it. They would have remained at half range of shell, and point blank shot.

His Soundings.

Mr. Stokes.—I was employed in sounding and surveying within the Isle d'Aix, from the 17th to the 24th of April. In some parts, the knowledge I thus obtained agreed with the Neptune Français, but in other parts I found a wide difference: *the Neptune Français giving more water than I found in many parts.*

Anchorage of La Grande Trousse.

Mr. Stokes.—Had the British ships been sent in on the morning of the 12th, and been disabled or lost a mast, they must have remained under the fire of the enemy's batteries until the tide flowed sufficiently to have floated them to the southward of the Palles shoal, where there was *a place in five fathoms at low water,* but this retreat, in my opinion, the ships would not have been able to have gained, as they had not room to wear clear of the Palles shoal. To get at that anchorage it is necessary to pass over a bank between the Boyart and Palles shoal where the water is from 12 to 16 feet deep at low water, but I should calculate on going over part of the twelve feet, because it is so narrow it is difficult to hit the passage of sixteen feet. *Line-of battle ships could not pass over it until near two-thirds flood.* I passed between [the Boyart and Palles] three or four different times in the 'Nimrod' cutter; I took soundings at those times.

Position of the French Ships.

Mr. S.—At daylight I observed the whole of the enemy's ships (except two of the line*) on shore. Four of them lay in

* 'Foudroyant' and 'Cassard.'

a group on the western part of the Palles shoal,* the others on the eastern side of that shoal, some off the Fouras and within Isle Madame: the frigates had entered the Charente except the 'Indienne,' which was on shore near Ennette Isle. The three-decker ['Océan'] was on the north-west edge of the Palles shoal, *with her broadside flanking the passage,* the north-west part nearest the deep water.

If we had attacked the enemy's ships on the morning of the 12th, from the position of the 'Foudroyant' 'Cassard,' and the three-decked ship ['Océan'] I think we should have sacrificed our own ships, without *making any impression on the enemy* or *destroying any of their ships.* The only time that they could have been attacked with any *prospect of success was at the time the attack was made;* the tide had then ebbed, and the [French] ships were fast on the ground with their sterns to the eastward, and they could not bring any guns to bear on the ships that attacked them. To that circumstance, in my opinion, we owed our whole success, for had the French ships grounded with their broadsides flanking the passage, they would have been enabled to have defended themselves, and they could not have been attacked with the least prospect of success.

On the morning of the 12th of April, the 'Foudroyant' and 'Cassard' both lay afloat, the 'Cassard' about one-third of a mile distant from the Isle of Aix, and close on the edge of the bank which extends from the Isle of Aix to the north-west points of the Palles shoal, the 'Foudroyant' lay also near the edge of that bank, and about three cables distant from the 'Cassard.' The three-decker

* 'Aquilon,' 'Ville de Varsovie,' 'Calcutta,' 'Tonnerre.'

('Océan') lay with her broadside flanking the passage. *They all three would have fired with complete effect on any ships that might approach.*

Mr. Stokes, continued: After the enemy's ships had run to the entrance of the Charente on that day, they could not have been approached by the British ships.

Had three or four line-of-battle ships run into Aix Roads when Lord Cochrane made the signal, they would there have met a force equal to themselves; they would have made the attack under every disadvantage, the whole of the fire of the Isle d'Aix, as well as the fire of the 'Foudroyant,' 'Cassard' and 'Océan' (three-decker) would have been directed on them. They would have had no place to retreat to, and their only safety would have remained in the destruction of the French ships, and silencing the batteries of Isle d'Aix, which I am sure it would have been impossible for them to have accomplished. Everything was done that was possible to be done for the destruction of the enemy's ships.

Mr. Samuel Raven, Master of the 'Cæsar,' sworn.

Had any ships been sent into Aix Roads on the morning of the 12th of April, to attack the ships that were aground, they could not have returned that day.

If they had been crippled in their masts, with the wind as it continued the whole of that day, the greatest part must have remained under the batteries, and I think the greatest part of them must have been lost.

The situations of the ships in that chart [Mr. Stokes's] are the same as they appeared to me.

I have surveyed every part of great and little Basque Roads, and find the depth of water to differ materially from the French chart.

The rise and fall of the tide is generally eighteen feet. I have known it rise nineteen feet, with strong N.W. wind at spring tide.

Mr. Fairfax, Master of the Fleet, examined. His Soundings.

I was employed in sounding and surveying in Basques Roads, and towards Aix Road, and reconnoitering the position of the enemy, previous to the 11th of April.

I found that the long sand extended full three quarters of a mile to the eastward and northward of where laid down in the Neptune Français.

Here are twenty-four feet in this part, when there are forty-five feet in the chart. This is the only chart we had as a guide. The variation is pourtrayed in the chart produced by Mr. Stokes. I gave him the marks, and I have all the different angles in my pocket, with the soundings.

Rise of Tide.

The rise and fall of the tide in Aix Roads is, I should suppose, from eighteen to twenty feet; the log book of the 'Caledonia' was constantly kept and marked, and it will be seen there. What I speak particularly from, is the night I was in Aix Roads in the 'Lyra.'

Position of French Ships.

Q.—Show upon the chart the position in which Lord Cochrane placed the French fleet when reporting his reconnaissance before the 11th.

Mr. F.—Nearly E.N.E. and W.S.W. by compass, to the best of my recollection. If they had been attacked in that way, it is impossible that above two of the ships could have been driven on shore by the fire-vessels.

I differed five points of the compass from Lord Cochrane.

Lord Gambier, when I was first introduced to Lord Cochrane, pointed out the difference of the reconnoitering, and said that the attack must be very different, if I am right in my positions, from the lines being so very much at variance. Lord Cochrane acquiesced; and Sir Harry Neale advised him to go to the situation that I had had (or to that purport) to convince himself that he had been wrong, which, from the report of his Lordship's evidence, I believe he did.*

Distance of English Fleet from Isle d'Aix.

Mr. Fairfax.—The 'Caledonia' from the citadel of Isle d'Aix was distant eleven thousand nine hundred yards, nearly six nautical miles. I ascertained this by the admeasurement of angles I took for the purpose.

The time of high water (on the 12th) would, by calculation, have been about five minutes past two, but strong northerly winds vary that very much. It was high water on that day about half-past, or twenty minutes past three.

Had ships of the line been sent into Aix Roads to attack the enemy's ships, on the morning of the 12th of April, they could not have even shifted their situation until 4 P.M.

Q.—Would ships so attacking have remained under the fire of the enemy's batteries until the wind should shift?

Mr. Fairfax.—I do not know how they could have helped themselves.

Q.—What would have been their probable fate?

Mr. Fairfax.—Destruction.

Q.—*Could any line-of-battle ship have run to leeward of the two enemy's ships that lay at anchor?*

Mr. F.—*Most certainly not. I have laid them down accurately in the chart, and it will be there seen they could not.*

* Vide Lord Cochrane's evidence.

Lord Gambier.—I asked that question because Lord Cochrane said he would first have attacked those ships, and then run to leeward.

Mr. Fairfax.—No ships could have hove to on the larboard tack with the wind as it was, but what they must have fallen off, so much as to bring themselves into a position to be raked by those two ships of the enemy. There was not room to go under their sterns. Some of the grounded ships certainly were in a position to annoy our ships, either in that anchorage, or in their approach to it.

Admiral Young.—If a part of the fleet had got under weigh immediately after the making of Lord Cochrane's first signal, at what time of the tide would they have arrived in Aix Roads, in a situation to attack the enemy?

Mr. Fairfax.—Upon the last quarter ebb. *They could not have attacked the enemy without endeavouring to go into the anchorage the enemy had left.* They could not have got within reach of them without pursuing that *deep water line which was protected by the enemy's batteries, and by the enemy's ships on shore.* I was in the 'Lyra' from the afternoon of the 11th, to the morning of the 12th. I returned to the 'Caledonia' at eight o'clock. There is one occurrence which, I believe, no one did know but myself, and which I reported: which is, that two French ships, I believe the Rear-Admiral and the Commodore, had been on shore at a little before three o'clock in the morning of the 12th; before daylight they loosed their sails, and caused me to get the private signals on board the 'Lyra' ready for sinking. Shortly afterwards, they got their heads to the eastward, and seemed to recede from me—seemed to increase their distance Their sails were taken in immediately.

Capt. Bligh, of the 'Valiant' line-of-battle ship examined.

Lord Gambier.—Do you recollect the situation of the enemy's fleet on the morning of the 12th of April, at daylight?

A.—I do. I think they were as here represented (on the chart made by Mr. Stokes).

Q.—About what distance was the 'Impérieuse' from the enemy, and from the 'Caledonia,' when Lord Cochrane made signal?

A.—The 'Caledonia' was about six miles from the Isle d'Aix, and the 'Impérieuse' about half-way—about three miles. Two of the enemy's ships were lying with their broadsides towards the entrance; some of the grounded ships lay with their broadsides towards the entrance.

Lord Gambier.—What number of guns appeared to command the anchorage of Aix Roads from the batteries of the Island?

A.—When at anchor in the Road of Aix, *I counted fifty guns. There may have been more, but I am certain there was not less.*

Q.—Did the enemy throw shells from the Island?

A.—They did. I do not think, under all the circumstances, that if the [English] line-of-battle ships had been sent in [on the morning of the 12th] *they ever would have got out again. I think it would have been sending them to inevitable destruction.*

Lord Gambier.—When I sent you into Aix Road, on the afternoon of the 12th of April, what were the directions I gave you—discretional or otherwise?

A.—*To use my utmost endeavours to destroy the enemy's ships.* I considered the order to be, in some measure, discretional, as the sole responsibility rested on the captain, *the pilot having refused to take the ship in.*

Q.—Do you recollect at what time I gave you those orders?

A.—The first order I received from the Commander-in-chief was at eight o'clock in the morning—to anchor near the Boyart shoal, within range of shell of the Isle d'Aix; the second order I received—to proceed in—was a little after two p.m.

Q.—Relate to the Court your proceedings generally in Aix Roads, until you returned to Basques Roads.

A.—At half-past two I weighed, in company with the 'Revenge,' and went in to the attack of the enemy's ships. Our frigates were lying in close line, about north and by west to south and by east, rather in a curved line. I anchored to the south-west of them, close to the 'Indefatigable,' and a little after three we commenced our fire on the 'Calcutta,' and shortly after I observed her crew abandon her, leaving her colours flying. We then directed our fire at the 'Aquilon,' 'Ville de Varsovie,' and 'Tonnerre,' as we could get our broadsides to bear upon them. The 'Ville de Varsovie's' crew partly left her, and, I think, she was taken possession of by the 'Unicorn's' boat. The 'Aquilon' was the only ship that struck after that, and the 'Tonnerre,' about five o'clock, was quitted by her crew, and set on fire by them. As the tide fell, the 'Revenge' grounded, but, by the exertions of Captain Kerr, she was soon got off, and went between the Boyart and the Palles. The frigates all followed her, except the 'Impérieuse,' who grounded about six o'clock that evening. In moving the 'Valiant,' she grounded on a knowl, and remained until eleven o'clock that night, when the tide rose, and she got off. At low water, there was seventeen feet alongside her. Four fire-vessels were all prepared

by the Commander-in-chief, and were sent in afterwards — two to have gone against the 'Foudroyant,' under the direction of Captain Seymour, and two against the 'Océan,' a three-decked ship. It was eleven o'clock, or half-past eleven, before they were completely ready, when, the wind being baffling, and blowing at times directly out, I applied to Admiral Stopford for some gun-brigs to cover the retreat of our boats, the enemy's boats being moored in two lines across the stern of the 'Océan,' with boats in advance. As the wind continued to blow directly out until four o'clock in the morning, I judged the attempt to be impracticable, and, therefore, ordered the fire-vessels to move where the 'Impérieuse' was laid, to follow the directions of Lord Cochrane. At half-past three, the prisoners being moved from the 'Aquilon' and the 'Ville de Varsovie,' and the water, at that time, up to their orlop decks, I ordered them to be set on fire; and at daylight I weighed in obedience to a signal from Admiral Stopford, and proceeded to Basques Roads.

I think the 'Valiant' was in a very perilous situation. Nothing but the wind shifting and blowing directly out could have saved her from being wrecked.

There were four of the enemy's ships destroyed; the 'Aquilon,' 'Ville de Varsovie,' and 'Tonnerre,' (ships of the line), and the 'Calcutta.' The 'Indienne' frigate was burnt two days after. I think the others must have received considerable damage from being on shore, all but two.

I think it impossible a ship could be better placed than the 'Revenge;' and, indeed, the general conduct of the 'Revenge' on that day reflects the highest credit on the zeal and bravery of her captain.

She [the 'Revenge'] anchored the northernmost and easternmost ship—about three cables' length within the 'Impérieuse,' and appeared to me to draw the fire of the batteries of the Isle d'Aix from the frigates to her.

The utmost zeal was manifested by every ship engaged, and I think it impossible that they could be better placed for the destruction of the enemy's ships than they were.

I did not observe that any of the fortifications had been blown up or destroyed. I think, if they had, I was so close that I must have seen it.

When Captain Beresford asked Lord Cochrane his reasons for making the telegraphic sign he made in the morning, (that half the fleet could destroy the enemy) he [Lord Cochrane] *said he calculated on our losing three or four of the ships,* if the Commander-in-chief had sent the squadron in.

I have already stated that, if our ships had gone in on the morning of the 12th, it would, in my opinion, have *been sending them to inevitable destruction.* I do not think the ships could have been sent in sooner than they were; and there did not appear to me to be the smallest neglect or unnecessary delay on the part of the Commander-in-chief.

I think everything was done that could be done, and even more than I at first expected.

I looked very attentively with a very good glass at about a mile distance from the fort, the fortifications of which appeared to me to be perfect. If there had been any heaps of stones or rubbish I must have seen them.

Admiral Young.—Was there any part of the works of the Island that appeared to be in a state of repair?

A.—*No part that I saw. Towards the sea they appeared*

to me to be throwing up or erecting another battery, under a very long tier of guns, and close to the water's edge. I mean by that, that the works of the Isle d'Aix were perfect, but that they were erecting another battery towards the sea, close to the water's edge.

Q. What reasons did the pilot give for not taking her [the 'Valiant'] in?

A.—That the water was too shoal, and as the wind and tide then were, he thought the ship would be lost.

Q. Were all the enemy's ships that were on shore on the Palles shoal, near enough to the British ships to be destroyed by them?

A.—No. The three ships that moved up the Charente were lying to the southward and eastward of the 'Océan,' and she was never within gun-shot of either the 'Valiant' or 'Revenge.'

Q. Do you mean that those ships were not within reach of the guns of the British squadron before they moved up the Charente?

A.—In my opinion they were not within reach.

Q. Did you receive any orders from the Commander-in-chief, previous to the moving of the fleet from the outer to the inner anchorage in Basque Roads on the morning of the 12th of April?

A.—I received orders from him, about eight o'clock, to proceed with the 'Valiant,' and anchor close to the Boyart shoal, and not to mind being within range of shell from the Isle d'Aix.

Capt. Kerr, of the 'Revenge' line-of-battle ship examined.

I think the situation [of the enemy's fleet at daylight] is as nearly marked here [in Mr. Stokes's chart] as can be.

I recollect the situation of the enemy's fleet perfectly. Seven sail on shore, and two sail of the line afloat; one line-of-battle ship advanced some distance up the river, and the frigates all shut in with the Isle d'Aix.

I read the [Lord Cochrane's first] telegraph off myself. I am quite positive the words "half the fleet," were used.

The two French ships of the line that were lying afloat were certainly in a position to have raked and crippled any ships advancing; the three-decker was likewise in a situation that part of her guns would have borne upon the ships going down.

No ship could have returned, as the wind was directly in, blowing fresh, and from the depth of water I found in the 'Revenge' at an earlier time of the afternoon, it is my firm belief that the ships advancing could not have got sufficiently near to have brought those two ships to close action, and *would have grounded themselves within range both of the batteries and the line-of-battle ships.*

When I stood out from under the batteries, I had no idea that I should be able to keep the 'Revenge' afloat. To the southward was the only position I could take, and I conceived it my duty to let her ground out of range, if possible, rather than within.

Q. Would it have been possible for line-of-battle ships or large frigates to have gone ahead of you, to attack the enemy's three-decked ship, and others towards the entrance of the Charente, with effect?

Capt. Kerr.—Certainly not. When the 'Revenge' quitted her situation, her keel was in the mud, and I was forced, from the ebb tide making down the Charente, and the wind on the larboard beam, to make sail inshore. We found so very

little water as we advanced, that any ship, however short a distance ahead, could not possibly have got out again, and must have grounded and been lost, as she was* immediately under the fire of the enemy's batteries.

Everything appeared to me to have been conducted by the different ships with the greatest zeal and gallantry.

Q. Were the three ships of the enemy that were upon the Palles, and which afterwards got off, at any time in a position to be attacked by us?

A.—Certainly not. They were advanced farther than the 'Tonnerre,' and the 'Revenge's' shot just reached the 'Tonnerre.'

Q. Could any more of the enemy's ships have been destroyed, had any of the King's ships been sent in sooner, &c.?

A.—No; it is my firm belief that had any ships gone in sooner they would have been crippled, *by which means the French ships* (I mean the two that remained afloat) *would have discovered the strength of their position—of course remained instead of going up the river, and prevented the four ships that were afterwards destroyed from being so.*

I thought that everything was done that could possibly be done; and *had the ships gone in sooner, I am confident that a number must have been lost.*

Q. From the first attack to the final cessation of hostilities was everything done, &c.?

A.—Everything.

Admiral Young.—Did you, on the morning of the 12th of April, see the three ships that were on shore, which

* Query—Would have been. Ed.

you have represented as being too far from the British squadron to be destroyed by them?

Capt. Kerr.—Yes.

Q.—In the same situation in the afternoon as the morning?

A.—No; they had got off, and advanced some distance up the river.

Q.—Were they, when you saw them in the morning, in a situation to be destroyed, if they had been attacked?

A.—No, certainly not.

Q.—What would have prevented their being destroyed?

A.—The two line-of-battle ships that were lying afloat, and the depth of water preventing our ships advancing sufficiently near.

Lord Gambier.—Did you on the 12th of April receive from Lord Cochrane any information of a secure anchorage for line-of-battle ships to the southward or westward, &c.?

A.—The only communication I had with him was through the Master of the 'Revenge.'

I felt the situation of the ship to be dangerous, and I sent him (the master) to sound round. On his return, he told me that Lord Cochrane had informed him he did not know, but that he believed there was water to windward.

Q.—To windward was to the northward?

A.—Yes; under the batteries.

President.—From every opportunity you had of noticing the bomb, brigs, sloops-of-war, and gun-brigs upon all the services on which they were employed against the enemy, did you see any instance of misconduct of any kind whatever in any of these vessels?

A.—None whatever. The 'Beagle' I had an opportunity

particularly of observing. She received the fire of the 'Aquilon.'

Admiral Duckworth.—From the state in which you left the enemy's ships on the morning of the 13th, when you came out of the Road of Aix, and your observation between that and the afternoon of the 14th, do you consider that by any other exertion than was used by the Commander-in-chief more ships of the enemy could have been destroyed than were destroyed?

A.—No, certainly not.

On my way out from Aix Road, on the 13th, the 'Revenge' was struck from the batteries on the Isle d'Aix, and the shells from Oléron were passing over at the same time. But the loss was on the day before.

Q.—What damage did you receive on the 12th?

A.—The bowsprit was severely wounded, great part of the running rigging and sails cut to pieces, five planks of the quarter-deck cut through, the quarter-deck beam entirely carried away, and a number of shots in different parts of the hull, three men killed, and fifteen wounded, two of whom afterwards died.

The damage in the hull and the killed and wounded were from the batteries in the Isle d'Aix entirely; part of the running rigging from the 'Aquilon' and 'Varsovie.' In coming out of Aix Roads I kept as close to the 'Boyart' as possible. I bore up for the end of it; I came out on the larboard tack.

Lord Gambier.—Did Lord Cochrane ever send to inform you that there was a safe anchorage to the southward?

A.—No.

Q.—From your experience of the *effect of the batteries*, what would have been the fate of the 'Revenge,' or any

other 74, anchored within two or three cables' length, with a view of engaging those batteries until you had silenced them?

A.—I should certainly have expected from the heavy fire they kept up, both in going in and coming out, that ships anchored there *must have been completely dismasted, and suffered a severe loss of men.*

If dismasted they would in all probability, and, indeed, must have been lost. If a vessel so situated had lost her foremast, she certainly could not have got before the wind, and without that, and having good way, so as to have been perfectly under command, she must have drifted to the southward and eastward, which would have taken her up to the Charente, or upon the Palles.

The batteries on the Isle d'Aix that I saw were not covered works, there were different tiers of guns, not one battery immediately above another, but at different heights.

Admiral Young.—Was the battery low enough to admit of its being destroyed by the guns from the ships?

A.—On the south side I think not.* On the south-west side the guns from the ships would have borne on the battery. Altogether it was one continued chain of works connected with the fortifications of the island, extending from the western round to the southern side of the island.

The guns never ceased to act upon the 'Revenge' during the whole time, from her going in until her coming out again.

I received the Commander-in-chief's order at nine in the morning to anchor close down upon the Boyart shoal

* Captain Broughton said two line-of-battle ships could silence the batteries on the South side: but afterwards acknowledged he had not counted the number of guns on the batteries.

within shell range, *to be ready to go in, as I might be able to prevent the enemy's ships warping off.*

Q.—Did you receive any orders contradictory to those?

A.—None whatever. On anchoring I waited on Captain Bligh, to know if the situation the 'Revenge' had taken was what he thought right, and likewise to state that the pilot would not take charge of the ship farther.

Capt. Beresford ('Theseus' line-of-battle ship), examined.

The 'Theseus's' signal was made about five o'clock to proceed into Aix Road and assist ships in distress, on which we instantly made sail.

Two of the enemy's ships were afloat (one bearing a flag and the other a broad pendant), which, in my opinion, would have *entirely crippled* any ships sent in to act on the morning of the 12th. Indeed, if two of our ships had been so placed, I think we could have defied an enemy's approach, for the approach must have been going end on.

[On being shown Mr. Stokes's chart.] That strikes me to be as nearly the position I can speak to.

Lord Gambier.—Could two or three line-of-battle ships on the morning of the 12th *have advanced to attack the French ships by passing near the Boyart, and putting their helms alee. Having thus brought their heads to the N.E. would they, by these means, have been enabled to bring their guns to bear with effect upon the enemy's ships, and be themselves out of reach of shot from the Isle d'Aix?*

A.—Certainly not.

Q.—Could any line-of-battle ships have run to leeward of those two ships of the enemy that lay at their anchorage

on the morning of the 12th of April have had space enough to have anchored, and thus attacked those ships?

A.—I should not like to have risked it myself, and it appeared to me that there was scarcely room for a friend to have passed between them and the shoal, setting aside all idea of an enemy firing in passing, for the smoke alone, besides the ship being crippled, must have caused you to be entangled, and the ship must have gone ashore and been lost. In short, if I had been ordered to attempt it, I should have thought the enterprize most hazardous. The flood-tide and the wind were both in.

Q.—Did you go on board the 'Impérieuse' on the afternoon of the 12th?

A.—I did. She ['Impérieuse'] was on shore, I told him [Lord Cochrane] I had just come from the 'Cæsar,' which was also on shore in a critical situation, within range of shot and shell—that, in my opinion, ships of the line had no business there, that Lord Gambier seemed to me to be most anxious to act with his fleet, but that, if he had sent them in then, it clearly appeared few would have returned, (if any, I think, were my expressions) and that it would have been madness to have done it. His Lordship said that three sail of the line might have been lost, which, in his opinion, did not signify. My reply was, that *even one sail of the line being lost would, in my opinion, have been a disgrace to the enterprise and to England.* This passed in the presence of Captains Bligh, Wooldridge, and Maitland. Colonel Cochrane, (Lord Cochrane's brother), and there were several others round Lord Cochrane at the time whose names I do not remember.

Q.—Was there any neglect or delay on the part of the Commander-in-chief?

A.—None whatever, it was my opinion on board the 'Caledonia,' as well as the opinion of many other officers, *that the proper time of tide for sending ships in was at the time that would insure their coming out in case of accident.*

I remember the signal from the 'Impérieuse,' that half the fleet could destroy the enemy, I thought the signal a very improper one, as it was impossible for the fleet to have acted against them at that moment.

I think everything was done that could be done, and much more than I ever expected. At the time that signal was made *I would not have sent in one ship.* I do not think ships of the line had any business there.

Rear-admiral Hon. Robert Stopford (second in command)

To the question of 'neglect,' 'delay' &c., (as before) asked by Mr. Bicknell, Admiral Stopford replied,

Under all the circumstances of the case, viewed in every point which I am capable of, and giving to the Commander-in-chief the free use and exercise of that discretion which every Commander-in-chief must possess in the execution of those measures which he alone is responsible; I do not think there was any delay or deficiency on his part in executing the service entrusted to his Lordship's care.

Admiral Young.—Do you know why they (the fleet) were unmoored (early on the 11th)?

A.—In the conversation I had with the Commander-in-chief at the time of unmooring, on board the 'Caledonia,' I understood it was for the purpose of being ready to take

advantage of any favourable circumstance in which the fleet could act.

Q.—Were they ('Revenge,' 'Valiant,' 'Cæsar,' and 'Theseus,') recalled by signal, or by any other means, by the Commander-in-chief.

A.—They were recalled by no order from the Commander-in-chief, but came out, or part of them, by directions from me (the 'Theseus' and 'Valiant') and the 'Revenge,' but I am not sure whether Captain Kerr received my orders: the ship came out the next morning.

Q.—What was your reason for calling these ships from the service on which they were ordered, without directions from the Commander-in-chief?

A.—The imminent and evident danger to which the ships were exposed by a longer continuance in that anchorage, also the certainty that they could not be employed with effect in the further destruction of the enemy's ships.

Q.—Do you consider the danger, &c., to have been from the batteries or the badness of the roadstead, or both?

A.—From both. The preceding evening (12th) when the 'Cæsar' was going in, the ship got ashore, and remained there three hours within range of the enemy's batteries, and this contrary to the expectations of the pilot, who told me there was sufficient water there. The captains of the 'Theseus' and 'Valiant' also informed me on that evening, that their ships had been aground.

Q.—On what shoal, &c.

A.—Either a continuation of the Boyart, or else a separate bank in the direction of that shoal. At the time we got ashore it was nearly dark, and the enemy did not perceive

our situation, and therefore only one shot from the batteries went over the ship after she struck the ground. If it had been daylight I should have despaired of getting the ship off.

Anchorage called La Grande Trousse.

Q.—Did you know that within the Road of Aix there was an anchorage capable of containing six sail of the line, perfectly out of the reach of shot or shells from any of the enemy's batteries?

Admiral Stopford.—Previous to our frigates going in I certainly did not know it, although some pilots were of opinion there was, and others that there was not, and respecting the number of ships that place was able to contain, I have understood it *never contained more than four ships* with five fathom at low water, out of the range of shot or shells. I must add, that had I known of that anchorage before I went in with the 'Cæsar,' I should have expected little good to arise from any of the ships going there, as it was completely out of the reach of annoyance to any of the enemy's ships that were on shore.

Rise of Tide.

Q.—You have commanded a squadron for a considerable time in Basque Roads?

Admiral Stopford.—I have. We generally estimate the rise of the tide at spring tide from eighteen to twenty-one feet, according to the set of the wind at the time of full moon, the north-west winds making the tide higher.

In my opinion, the dislodgement from their anchorage of the enemy's ships by fire-ships, removed but a very small part of the obstacle which ever existed in my mind, and in those of other officers who have commanded before me, towards the British fleet going in to attack them. The difficulties of the navigation, and our imperfect acquaintance with it, with the wind blowing right in, would, I think, *have made me unworthy of command, if I had risked a fleet or squadron entrusted to my charge, in a situation where our's would have been all the loss, the enemy's all the advantage.*

I will not pretend to say whether the frigates ordered in by the Commander-in-chief were ordered in before or after the 'Impérieuse' made the signal, "in want of assistance," but there were several vessels under weigh nearly about that time going in.

[Early in the morning] the signal was made to weigh, and the fleet moved, in consequence, nearer to the Isle d'Aix, as the Commander-in-chief informed me, for the purpose of being more in a situation to observe himself the motions and proceedings of the enemy, *and with the intention of going in with the fleet (if the wind had shifted so far to the eastward as to allow the fleet to come out again) for which event he expressed the greatest impatience and desire.*

Q.—At what time did he give you his reasons for going in?

A.—*Some time between eight and ten* a.m. *on the 12th, when I was on board the 'Caledonia.'* The Commander-in-chief desired the 'Etna' bomb, and the other smaller vessels to proceed in to bombard the enemy's ships that were lying on shore, giving directions

also to the captains of the 'Valiant,' 'Revenge,' and 'Bellona,' and some other ships, to advance towards the Boyart shoal, in order to support the operations of the bomb vessel. The 'Etna,' and smaller vessels, immediately proceeded to bombard the ships without anchoring. *These directions were given to the captains on board the 'Caledonia,' by the Commander-in-chief in person, and in my hearing.*

Q.—At the time of those orders being given, did you understand it to be the Commander-in-chief's intention that every ship, of every description, so ordered, should go in as soon and as far as the captain's discretion would admit?

A.—From the general signal having been made for ships to prepare for battle, with springs on their cables, and to bend their sheet cables through the stern posts, also from the conversation I had with the Commander-in-chief, and witnessing his impatience and disappointment at circumstances not *allowing him immediately to go in with the fleet, it was my full conviction that such were his intentions —that the ships should go in as far as they could, and as soon as they could.*

Every frigate went in, in consequence of signals from the Commander-in-chief—brigs first, and then the frigates. I do not think it could have exceeded half an hour afterwards, when the 'Valiant' and 'Revenge' [line-of-battle ships] went in: being two of the ships previously appointed, and which were in advance.

Admiral Young.—From the time of the arrival, &c., was there any neglect or delay, &c.?

A.—So far from it, that it always appeared to me that the Commander-in-chief was actuated by a warm zeal for

the service, and a desire to discharge the duties intrusted to him with punctuality and effect.

Lord Gambier.—What information did you receive, before you left Basque Roads, of the state of the enemy's ships which escaped up the Charente after the attack on the 12th of April?

A.—The information is contained in this paper, which is a letter I transmitted to the Commander-in-chief, at the time of receiving the intelligence:—"The 'Tourville,' 'Regulus,' and 'Patriot,' each of 74 guns, so damaged as to be unfit for sea, reported to be cut down for mortar vessels. The 'Océan,' 120, hove all her guns overboard, except twenty or thirty; provisions and stores overboard; anchors and cables cut away. The 'Foudroyant,' 80, only twenty-six guns saved; provisions and stores hove overboard; anchors and cables cut away. The 'Cassard,' 80, damaged, but to be repaired, and is preparing for dock. The 'Jemappes,' 74, received no damage, having hit the passage the first night, and gone up to Rochefort."

Captain Wolfe, (the 'Aigle').

Q.—Did it appear to you that the Commander-in-chief, for *an* time, neglected or delayed destroying the enemy's ships on the 12th of April, &c., &c.?

A.—No.

Q.—Was any blame imputable to Lord Gambier for *any* part of the proceedings, &c.?

A.—I have no recollection of anything of the kind. I think evrything was done that could be done. There were no vessel under his Lordship's command, with a draught

of water that could have further effected the destruction of the enemy's ships. Every application that I made to his Lordship to effect their destruction was always complied with.

President.—When you joined the 'Impérieuse,' on the 14th of April, for the purpose of relieving that ship, &c., what communication had you with the captain?

A.—I asked him what he would recommend, with the vessels under my orders, for the further destruction of the enemy's ships. He told me that the large mortar, on board the 'Etna,' was burst, and the only thing we had to do, was to bomb them as long as the shells of the other mortar lasted; that, if an opportunity offered of sending the fire-vessels, it should be done by daylight, as many of the officers of the fire-vessels had made such a bad business on the night that the fire-vessels acted. I then went on board. Shortly afterwards, on his leaving the ship, feeling the great responsibility I had in the command in that place, I asked him, as he was getting under weigh, whether there was anything else he could suggest for the destruction of the enemy. I think, to the best of my recollection, he said, "Nothing more than to bomb them while the shells last." And I think they were all expended that night.

Q.—Do you know of any particular fire-ship, or fire-ships, improperly conducted, &c.?

A.—I cannot particularize them. The ship that passed between us and the Isle of Oléron, and got on shore there, was the only one I particularly noticed.

Q.—Do you know her name?

A.—I do not. Our ship was very nearly burnt by two that were badly managed. . . Five behaved very well; one of

them was commanded by Captain Newcombe, who desired me to remember he had passed us. Lieutenant Cooksley, of the 'Gibraltar,' was another who begged I would keep my eye on him, as he should not fire his vessel till he was among them (meaning the enemy). I did, and saw him run on board of a two-decked ship of the enemy.

Q.—Did it appear to you that any of these vessels (bomb, ships-of-war, and gun-brigs) were, in any instance whatever, improperly conducted?

A.—I do not remember any such thing. I think, if there had, I should have seen it.

Q.—No misconduct in any of these vessels?

A.—None.

Captain Rodd, ('Indefatigable').

Mr. Bicknell.—Did it appear to you, &c. (as before)?

A.—I know of no delay in the Commander-in-chief.

No blame whatever was imputable to him for any part of his conduct.

President.—From the first attack, &c. (as before)?

A.—I believe everything was done that could be done with safety to his Majesty's ships.

Admiral Young.—Do you mean, without their being exposed to any danger, or more than the circumstances would justify?

A.—That they would have been exposed *to more danger than the circumstances would justify.* I think, if they had gone up farther, *every ship* would have been lost, or, at least, it would have been a thousand chances to one against them. As it was, we were on ground for upwards of an hour in the 'Indefatigable,' and had been striking for an

hour before that; and the pilot remarked to me, that if I did not warp the ship out, we should be nearly dry; on which I ran out two hawsers, and warped the ship out of the situation she was in at first; and she grounded again afterwards upon the Palles shoal.

As I was going in, the shot from Aix went over us, and the shells from Oléron crossed us. When at anchor near the 'Impérieuse,' a shot passed through the maintop-mast of the 'Indefatigable,' and wounded the maintop-sail-yard.

If I had gone farther in, I must have run aground.

Lord Cochrane hailed the 'Indefatigable,' as we were passing along on the 13th, but what he said I could not distinctly make out. I told him we were ordered out. He asked me, as well as I could understand him, if I had been aground. I replied, "Yes." He said, "I should like to take your berth," (where we had been lying).

Q.—Had the 'Calcutta,' or any of the line-of-battle ships struck to the 'Impérieuse' before you anchored and commenced the action?

A.—Most assuredly not. Several broadsides were fired at the 'Calcutta' from the 'Indefatigable' and 'Valiant,' when Lord Cochrane, or some person from the 'Impérieuse,' hailed me, and said the 'Calcutta' had struck. I could only see her at intervals through the smoke.

I was in Basques Roads from the 3rd of April, until the Commander-in-chief sailed.

Q.—Can you state any instance of neglect, &c., in the Commander-in-chief?

A.—None whatever.

Captain Hardyman (*'Unicorn'*).

I do not know of any neglect or unnecessary delay on the part of the Commander-in-chief. I think everything was done that could be done. The 'Beagle' was three or four ships' length nearer to the enemy than the frigates.

I can state no instance of neglect, &c.

Captain Godfrey (*of the 'Etna,' bomb*).

I got into Aix Roads nearly half-an-hour before the 'Impérieuse' commenced firing upon the enemy. I passed her about one o'clock. I had three gun-brigs with me.

Q.—From the first attack upon the enemy was everything done that could be done?

A.—Yes, most certainly. When at anchor in the Road of Aix I observed the fortifications on the island. I did not perceive that they were blown up or destroyed. I counted the number of guns. I can speak distinctly to their being, on the first day, forty at least, that commanded the entrance to the Charente on the south side of the island.

Q.—Did it appear that any part of those works were in a ruinous state?

A.—No.

Q.—Can you state any instance of neglect or delay, &c., in the Commander-in-chief?

A.—No, most certainly not.

James Wilkinson Esq. (*Secretary to Lord Gambier.*)

Lord Cochrane in conversation [April 14th] told the Admiral [Lord Gambier], that if he had sent in the ships agreeably to his signal, he calculated or reckoned upon

three or four of them being lost, or words to that effect. This alludes to the signal of the 12th: "Seven of the enemy's ships on shore, half the fleet can destroy them." He said nothing of your Lordship's [Gambier] conduct in my presence. He spoke generally of misconduct of the sloops and small vessels, and of a great many of the fire-ships, and he particularly noticed the gun-brigs—small vessels was the expression. I am confident the men-of-war sloops were intended to be referred to, from the circumstance of the 'Beagle' being mentioned. Lord Gambier expressed his regret that his Lordship entertained so bad an opinion of the conduct of the small vessels; and particularly asked Lord Cochrane as to the conduct of the 'Beagle.' He observed to Lord Cochrane that the conduct of the 'Beagle' had gained her the admiration of himself and the officers of the fleet who had observed her, and said, "Surely she behaved well," or words to that effect. Lord Cochrane in reply said, "I have a great regard and esteem for Captain Newcombe, and from his having been an old messmate of mine, it may be supposed I should say everything in his favour, but, my Lord, I cannot make an exception respecting the conduct of the officers commanding gun-brigs." He made comment on the conduct of other officers, which I shall not relate unless the Court require it.

Captain Douglas (of the 'Bellona,' line-of-battle-ship) examined.

Had any ships been sent in to the attack of the French on the morning of the 12th of April, the enemy's ships were in a position to rake and injure our ships as they advanced. The wind blowing very strong, they could

not have returned until the ebb. The impression on my mind at that time was, that they would have been burnt by red-hot shot, which the enemy had sufficient time to prepare.

Q.—Was there any neglect or unnecessary delay on the morning of the 12th, &c., in taking measures for destroying the French ships?

A.—On the contrary. I think the happy time for effecting it was chosen by the Commander-in-chief. In my opinion everything was done that could be done under the circumstances. As far as I can judge of the merits of the Commander-in-chief, he evinced the greatest zeal to promote the public service on all occasions, and I do not know of any neglect whatever.

The evidence of Captains Newman, Ball, and Burlton, is very short, because they were not sent in to the attack in Aix Roads on the 12th, and because the nature of their answers rendered further questions unnecessary.

Q.—From the first attack upon the ships of the enemy, to the time of your leaving Basque Roads, was everything done that could be done, to effect the destruction of the enemy's ships?

Captain George Burlton, (of the 'Resolution'). I think there was.*

Captain Henry Ball, (of the 'Gibraltar'). I think there was everything done.†

Captain J. Newman, (of the 'Hero'). Perfectly so.‡

* Minutes, p. 226. † Ibid, p. 227. ‡ Ibid, p. 228.

Admiral Young.—From the time of your arrival in Basque Roads, to the time of your quitting it, can you state any instance of neglect, misconduct, or inattention to the public service, in the proceedings of the Commander-in-chief?

Captain Burlton.—I know of none.

Captain Ball.—No; I cannot.

CHAPTER XII.

LORD GAMBIER'S DEFENCE.

Mr. President,

I thank you, Sir, and the rest of the members of this honourable Court, for having complied with my request, that a short interval* might be allowed me before I entered upon my defence.

I have also to express my satisfaction, that the whole of my conduct and proceedings in Basques Roads is now under your consideration, in consequence of my having applied for this Court-Martial. And although I cannot but lament the inconvenience occasioned thereby to the service, and to many individuals, I trust the necessity of it must be evident to the members of this Court; for either I had to adopt this measure, or by a tacit acquiescence in the insinuations thrown out against me by Lord Cochrane, have compromised, not only my own honour, but also that of the brave officers and men serving under my command.

The proceedings of the Court will show whether any

* Namely one day—the Court being adjourned from Friday evening to Monday morning.

misconduct has existed in the execution of the service under consideration; if any has existed (of which I am perfectly unconscious) it is right that the nation should know it; not as resting upon the unsupported opinion of an individual, but on the unprejudiced judgment of this tribunal.

I was prepared when I first came before you, with what appeared to me a complete justification "of my conduct and proceedings, as Commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet, employed in Basques Roads, between the 17th of March and 29th April last," to which your enquiry is directed; but I could not be aware of the oral testimony that was to be brought forward in support of the charge which their Lordships have, at the instance of Lord Cochrane, been induced to make against me; namely, "that on the 12th of April, the enemy's ships being then on shore, and the signal having been made that they could be destroyed, I did, for a considerable time, neglect or delay taking effectual measures for destroying them." I was ready to admit, that, from the time of my observing, on the morning of the 12th, the situation of the enemy, communicated to me also by signal from the 'Impérieuse,' some time did elapse before the enemy's ships were attacked; but I was prepared to prove, *most incontrovertibly*, that no neglect, or unnecessary delay took place in effecting the destruction of those ships; and I have now the satisfaction to find, that out of all the officers of the fleet who are summoned on this trial, the charge rests upon the *unsupported*, and I may say *already refuted*, testimony of the Captain of the 'Impérieuse.'

I believe there is not a precedent to be found in the naval annals of Great Britain, of an officer of the rank I

have the honour to hold, commanding a fleet which has performed so important a service as that accomplished under my direction—approved as that service has been by the Board of Admiralty, and considered by His Majesty's government as even deserving the thanks of both Houses of Parliament—being obliged, from a sense of what is due to his own character and honour, as well as to the profession to which he belongs, to appeal to a naval tribunal against the loose and indirect accusation of an officer so much his inferior in rank. I am warranted in saying that the execution of this service was approved by the Board of Admiralty, because, in a letter from their Lordships' Secretary, dated the 22nd of April acknowledging the receipt of my public despatches on the occasion, he says he is "commanded by their Lordships to congratulate me on the brilliant success of the force under my command, in the attack of the enemy's ships in the Isle d'Aix Roads, by fire-vessels and subsequently by detachments from my fleet, which terminated in the capture and destruction of four of the enemy's ships; and to signify their Lordships' directions to me to express their approbation of the great exertions of Rear-Admiral Stopford, Sir Harry Neale, and the several other officers mentioned by me as having been most actively employed and having particularly distinguished themselves upon this important service." And I am warranted in the assertion, that the service was considered as deserving the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, because, in the letter from their Lordships' Secretary to Lord Cochrane, dated 29th of May (which is already before the Court) it is expressly stated that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government to move for such thanks.

Lord Cochrane, however, warned the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty, that, if this measure were attempted, he should, if standing alone, oppose it, so far as regarded the Commander-in-chief. Thus, without specifically objecting to the thanks being given for the service performed, directing his hostility personally at me, he made his attack as publicly, though *not so fairly*, as if he had at once exhibited formal charges.

Lord Cochrane, as a member of Parliament, may most assuredly support or oppose public measures as he shall think proper. In the present proceedings, however, he stands in the situation only of an officer serving under my command, as appears by the following letter to me from the First Lord of the Admiralty.

Admiralty, May 29, 1809.

My Lord,

Having, in conversation, informed Captain Lord Cochrane that it was the intention of His Majesty's government to move the thanks of both Houses of Parliament to your lordship, and to the officers, seamen, and marines serving under your command in Basques Roads, Lord Cochrane declared to me that, in the event of such a measure being proposed in Parliament, he should feel himself bound, by his public duty, to object to the thanks, *as far as they should apply to the Commander-in-chief.* Under these circumstances, it has been deemed expedient to suspend the motion for the vote of thanks, and to call upon Lord Cochrane, by the Board of Admiralty, to state the ground on which he has intimated to the First Lord of the Admiralty his intention to oppose the vote of thanks, as far as respects your Lordship; that the Board of Admi-

ralty may thereby be enabled to judge how far the grounds to be stated by Lord Cochrane may be of a nature to suspend the motion in Parliament, or to call for any further investigation by the Board, or in any other way.

I have felt it due to your Lordship to give you the earliest information of this state of things, and to acquaint you that a letter will this day be written to Captain Lord Cochrane, in conformity to the above resolution of the Board of Admiralty, a copy of which, together with the answer of Lord Cochrane, will be, without delay, communicated to your Lordship.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) MULGRAVE.

Whether Lord Cochrane supposed he might, with impunity, endeavour to lower me in the opinion of my country, and of my sovereign, signal marks of whose favour had, at this instant, been exclusively conferred upon himself—whether his Lordship thought he could exalt his own reputation at the expense of mine, and whether he expected that his threat would intimidate me to silence—I know not; but if these were his ideas, I assure myself the result will prove to him that they were founded in error; for I will never permit any man to proceed as Lord Cochrane has done, without availing myself of the means which the laws of my country afford, to show the futility and injustice of such an attack.

By the letter of the Secretary of the Admiralty to Lord Cochrane, his Lordship was called upon to state the grounds on which he had intimated his determination of objecting, in his place in the House of Commons, to a

vote of thanks to me individually, and his reply is already before you.

After making his undefined accusation against his admiral, he excuses himself from explanation by a general reference to the log and signal-books of the fleet, without knowing, if I may judge from the imperfect state of his own log,* what that general reference might produce.

Therefore, because he does not accord with me in opinion, Lord Cochrane, whose extent of responsibility has, perhaps, never exceeded the charge of a single ship, and to whom, in judgment, I will not reduce my experience to a comparison, becomes my accuser, whilst, from my situation, I am responsible for every act of my fleet, and for the fate of every ship composing it.

I am so confident (and I hope it is already evident to the Court) that Lord Cochrane has no cause whatever for accusing me of any dereliction of duty, that it might al-

* *Admiral Stanhope.*—"I cannot help observing that there appears to have been some very important omissions [in the Impérieuse's log] which are afterwards entered in several parts—several very material circumstances." Minutes, p. 30.

Judge-Advocate.—Then that entry in the 'Impérieuse' log-book is not correct?

Lord Cochrane.—It is not correct by any means.

Admiral Stanhope.—Here are two log-books produced in Court. I want to know whether it is understood that the Captain has a log-book distinct from the ship's log, and, if so, which is to be taken to be correct, for Lord Cochrane states that he will not answer for the correctness of the ship's log?

Judge-Advocate.—He goes further, for he says it certainly is not correct.

President.—And that is what is sworn to by the master.—Minutes, pp. 29, 30, 31, 46, &c. Page 198 of this volume. Log-books 1, 2, 3, of the Appendix at the end of the Minutes.

most be supposed something had occurred in my personal conduct towards his Lordship which had afforded him grounds of dissatisfaction. The contrary, however, is the fact; more liberality could not have been shown than Lord Cochrane received at my hands;* and although a considerable deal of disappointment was manifested throughout the fleet, on his arrival to conduct the service to be performed by fire-vessels, yet every officer in the fleet rendered him the most ready assistance, not only in valuable suggestions (the entire credit of which seems to have been assumed by his Lordship), but by every other means that zeal and courage could afford.

Lord Cochrane, on presenting himself to me after the action, was general in complaint† of the officers who commanded the other ships, engaged at the same time with himself, on the attack of the enemy; but, having had equal means with his Lordship of judging of the conduct of those officers, I do aver that it was highly meritorious.‡

At the time Lord Cochrane made this general complaint, I had not the smallest suspicion§ that there existed in his mind those sentiments of *disapprobation of my conduct,* which, by his proceedings since his return home, I am to suppose he then entertained. It would, in such a case, have been liberal, and I think also his duty, to

* *Lord Dundonald says in his Autobiography*—"Strange as it may appear, almost the only persons who treated me with consideration were Lord Gambier, his second in command Admiral Stopford, and his second in command Sir Harry Neale."—*vol. i. p.* 362.

† Vide evidence of Mr. Wilkinson. Minutes, p. 185-6-7, also p. 236 of this volume.

‡ Vide General Evidence on the Court-Martial.

§ Vide Mr. Wilkinson's evidence. Minutes, p. 185.

have made a communication to me to that effect. I should then have been enabled to have guarded, in some measure, against his attack upon my character on his arrival in England.

I scarcely need observe in this Court, that however highly courage is to be valued in an officer, it is always incomplete in its consequences without the equal exercise of judgment and discretion, it being the duty of a commander, not only to destroy his enemy, but to accomplish that destruction with the least possible loss on his part; and I submit to the Court, whether there ever was a service which (under all circumstances) more required the exercise of those qualities than the one in question; the effect produced exceeded my most sanguine expectation, and, I believe, the expectations of the whole fleet.*

The points under the consideration of the Court appear to be the following:

Whether the lapse of time between the discovery in the morning of the enemy's ships being on shore and the attack, was not, under all circumstances, *absolutely necessary for the advantageous accomplishment of the intended service*;† whether it was not my duty,

* Vide evidence of Captain Beresford, Bligh, &c. Minutes, p. 163, 170, &c.

† "It is my firm belief that had ships gone in sooner they would have been crippled—by which means the French ships (I mean the two that remained afloat) would have discovered the strength of their position, of course remained instead of going up the river, and prevented the four ships who were afterwards destroyed from being so."—Evidence of Captain Kerr. Vide Minutes, p. 173.

as Commander-in-chief, to be governed by a general view of the whole of those circumstances, rather than yield to the suggestion of one, and that a very junior officer; and whether an earlier attack would have been attended with greater advantages? In short, was there not accomplished, at the time the attack was made, all that could at any time have been effected?*

It is in support of these propositions I undertake to show, as indeed is already in evidence before you, that had I not delayed sending in the ships to the attack until the time I did, the loss of ships, and of the lives of valuable seamen, would, in the opinion of all the officers of the fleet, have amounted to a large proportion of the force so employed;† and yet it seems that I am now represented as deserving of censure for having prevented that wanton destruction; but I am satisfied that the Court will, by the result of their investigation, find that not a *single additional* ship‡ of the enemy's would have been destroyed by a more early adoption of those measures which it is imputed to me I delayed or neglected!

I shall now proceed without any immediate reference to the evidence already before the Court, to the direct matter of the inquiry and charge, to which my letter

* "I think the happy time for effecting it was chosen by the Commander-in-chief."—Evidence of Captain Douglas. Vide Minutes, and p. 237 of this vol, also evidence of the other captains.

† "I have already stated that if our ships had gone in on the morning of the 12th, it would have been sending them to inevitable destruction. . ."—Minutes, p. 163. Evidence of Captain Bligh of the 'Valiant.' See also evidence of Admiral Stopford, Captain Kerr, &c.

‡ Vide General Evidence, p. 193 to 238 of this vol.

to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 10th of May partly applies. This letter was written on my being informed that my public despatch, of the 14th of April, had been considered as not sufficiently explanatory; but even that letter proves short of what has now become necessary to submit to the Court, put, as I am, upon my defence.

I must confess that, in relating the circumstances of what I felt an important service, I was not sensible that any part of my conduct would require explanation. I conceived that a brief statement of the facts which had occurred would have been satisfactory, and I will venture here to express my firm conviction that during the whole period which is the subject of inquiry, and more particularly on the very day on which I am charged with a dereliction of duty, it will be found by this honourable Court that in the previous arrangement I exerted the utmost faculties of my mind to prevent any circumstance escaping me which forethought could dictate, and that at the time of attack I acted with all the zeal* for the success of the service an officer could evince, whose *duty it was to consider the proper application and preservation of his own fleet, as well as the destruction of the enemy.*

The squadron under my command, including the advanced frigates, having been driven from their station off Brest by the continued prevalence of tempestuous westerly winds,† it was on my return off that port on the 23rd of February that I ascertained the escape of the French fleet.

I had no information of the time when the enemy

* Vide General Evidence.

† Attested by the log of the 'Caledonia,' &c.

escaped from this port, or of the course they had taken, consequently had no grounds upon which I could exercise any discretion. This reduced me to the necessity of following my orders, which, in such an event, distinctly directed me to detach the senior flag-officer, with such force as I might conclude was equal to the enemy, and to return myself to Causand Bay for further orders. I accordingly detached Vice-Admiral Sir John Duckworth, with eight sail of the line, and a frigate, in pursuit of the French fleet, on the course pointed out in their Lordships' orders before referred to, which left me, with the 'Caledonia' alone, in the mortifying situation of being obliged to return to port.

I refer back to this event, in order to show why the 'Caledonia' bearing my flag, became detached from the fleet, a circumstance which, at the time, exposed me to insinuations highly painful to my feelings.

In proceeding to Causand Bay, the 'Naiad' joined me off Falmouth, when Captain Dundas informed me that the enemy's fleet from Brest, consisting of eight sail of the line and two frigates, had entered Basque Roads on the 21th of February, where they had been reinforced by the four sail of the line and two frigates previously lying in Aix Roads. This communication having been made to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I received orders from their Lordships, on the 3rd of March, to put to sea with the 'Caledonia,' 'Tonnant,' 'Illustrious,' 'Resolution,' and 'Bellona,' together with any frigates and smaller vessels under my command, that might be ready for sea at Plymouth, to form a junction with Rear-Admiral Stopford, commanding His Majesty's squadron off Rochefort; and, in the event of not finding the enemy's ships there, to proceed

in pursuit of them on a prescribed course, beyond the limits of my station, the information given by Captain Dundas affording every reason to conclude, from the enemy's ships having only hove to in Basque Roads, that they had immediately sailed from thence on their original destination.

On my arrival off Rochefort on the 7th March, I found that Rear-Admiral Stopford, with the 'Cæsar,' 'Defiance,' 'Donegal,' and four frigates, had, in the course of the 24th February, been joined by Captain Beresford, with the 'Theseus,' 'Triumph,' 'Valiant,' 'Revenge,' and one frigate, and shortly after by the 'Hero,' and that the French fleet had moved from Basque into Aix Roads, and taken an anchorage there, with eleven sail of the line and four frigates. *In the mere operation of shifting their berth into Aix Roads, in consequence of the intricacy of the navigation,* one of their ships, the 'Jean Bart,' of 74 guns, was totally wrecked.

Judging that the occupation of Basque Roads by the fleet under my command, would be most effectual, either for blockading the enemy, or for carrying on offensive operations should they prove practicable, *I immediately ordered some of the masters of the fleet to proceed thither, and to take every advantage of weather, in sounding and surveying the anchorage,* in order to ascertain the part most advisable to be occupied by a fleet of the magnitude of that under my orders.

On the 15th of March, I issued the following General Order to the fleet.

General Order.

When the fleet takes an anchorage in Basque Roads, the

starboard division will anchor in a line E. by S. from the 'Caledonia,' and the larboard division will anchor in a line W. by S. from her. The ships are to be moored. The anchors to be placed E.N.E., and W.S.W., from each other, with the small bower to the westward; and the ships are to be at the distance of two cables' length from each other.

The frigates and brigs are to be placed one mile distant in advance, either towards the Isle of Aix or the town of La Rochelle, according to the direction in which the wind blows; and some of them will be further advanced after the close of day, as an additional guard against any attempts the enemy may make with fire-vessels against the fleet.

Every ship is to be held in constant readiness for action, at all times, upon the shortest notice.

Every preparation is to be made, and kept in constant readiness, to resist and frustrate the attempts of the enemy, by the means of fire-ships or vessels, and the ships are always to be ready to slip their cables, if it should be necessary, leaving buoys upon them.

Two boats from each ship are to be held constantly ready, with fire grapnels in them, on board the advanced frigates, to tow off fire-vessels. The boats are to go on board the advanced frigates every night, soon after sunset, to remain the night under the orders of the captain having the charge of the advanced guard; they are to return to their proper ships in the morning.

Two brigs are to be advanced beyond the frigates, with three boats on board each, which are to row guard in moderate weather, and when the wind blows from the eastward, and a vigilant look-out is to be kept upon the

movements of the enemy, from all the ships and vessels of the advanced guard. If any of the enemy's vessels approached the fleet, they are to be fired at; and if they are suspected to be fire-vessels, blue lights are to be immediately burnt as a signal thereof. If the enemy's ships of the line are discovered to be in motion, rockets are instantly to be thrown up to apprize the fleet. In either case the frigates will get under sail, and act in such a manner as may be most suitable to counteract the operations of the enemy, and assist the fleet in any way they may be able.

Given on board the 'Caledonia,' at anchor off the entrance to the Pertuis d'Antioche, 15th of March 1809.

(Signed) GAMBIER.

On the 17th of March, the fleet anchored in Basques Roads, and was moored in a line, as directed by the General Order, with the frigates and gun-brigs advanced towards the enemy.

The 'Caledonia' was anchored, Chasseron Tower bearing W. ¼ N. citadel of the Isle d'Aix. S. by E. ¾ E. and the enemy's fleet, lying at the distance of about six miles S.E., was moored in two compact lines, and the most distant ship of each line within point-blank range of the batteries on the Isle d'Aix, with their frigates advanced towards the entrance to the Aix Roads.

This compact position of the enemy was evidently taken to avoid the shoals close around the anchorage.

The nearer and more distinct view I now obtained of the enemy's position confirmed me in my opinion of the impracticability of a successful attack upon their ships by the fleet.

I was also satisfied that the only way of attacking the enemy was by the means of fire-ships, as *suggested in my letter* to the First Lord of the Admiralty, written four days after my arrival off Rochefort as follows:—

'Caledonia,' off the Pertuis d'Antioche, 11th March, 1809.

My dear Lord,

The advanced work between the Isle of Aix and Oléron,* which I mentioned in my last letter, I find was injured in its foundation, and is in no state of progress; that is, therefore, no obstacle to our bombarding the enemy's fleet, if you should be disposed to make an attempt to destroy it. A trial was made six years ago when a Spanish squadron lay at the same anchorage, but without effect. The report of it you will find in the Admiralty; it was made by Sir Charles Pole.

The enemy's ships lie very much exposed to the operations of fire-ships: it is a horrible mode of warfare, and the attempt very hazardous, if not desperate; but we should have plenty of volunteers for the service. If you mean to do anything of the kind, it should be with secrecy and quickly, and the ships used should not be less than those built for the purpose, at least a dozen, and some smaller ones.

Yours, my dear Lord, most faithfully,

(Signed) GAMBIER.

The Lord Mulgrave.

This letter was received by his Lordship on the 19th March, who, indeed, had anticipated my sentiments, as

* Boyart.

appears by the following letter from their Lordships' secretary, already before the Court, but which I will here recapitulate, in order to preserve the chain of my narrative.

[Most secret.] Admiralty Office, 19th March, 1809.

My Lord,

I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint your Lordship that they have ordered twelve transports to be fitted as fire-ships, and to proceed and join you off Rochefort, and that Mr. Congreve is also under orders to proceed to your Lordship, in a coppered transport, (the Cleveland) containing a large assortment of rockets, and supplied with a detachment of marine artillery, instructed in the use of them, and placed under Mr. Congreve's orders. That the bomb-vessels named in the margin ('Etna,' 'Thunder,' 'Vesuvius,' 'Hound,' and 'Fury') are likewise under orders to fit for sea with all possible expedition, and to join you as they may be ready. That all these preparations are making with a view to enable your Lordship to make an attack on the French fleet at their anchorage off Isle d'Aix, if practicable, and I am further commanded to signify their Lordships' direction to you, to take into your consideration the possibility of making an attack upon the enemy, either conjointly with your line-of-battle ships, frigates, and small craft, fire-ships, bombs, and rockets, or separately by any of the above named means.

You are to man the fire-ships with volunteers from the fleet, entrusting the said ships in charge of officers of the rank of commander, who may happen to be present, and shall volunteer their services on this occasion. But as it

is not likely there will be officers sufficient of that rank to command all the fire-ships, you are to make up the deficiency by such lieutenants of the line-of-battle ships as shall volunteer their services, giving the preference to the first lieutenants; and when the said fire-ships are manned by volunteers from the fleet, you are to cause their original crews to be received on board the ships of your fleet. And in the event of the said fire-ships being destroyed, you are to send home the said men in order to their being discharged, furnishing them with such certificates or protections as shall secure them from being impressed into His Majesty's service. You are also to hold out to the volunteers, and the officers to whom the command of the fire-ships may be entrusted, every expectation of reward in the event of success.

It is their Lordships' further direction, that you state to me, for their information, whether any further augmentation of force, of any description, is, in your opinion, necessary, to enable you to perform this service with full effect, that it may be prepared and forwarded to you without a moment's delay; their Lordships having come to a determination to leave no means untried to destroy the enemy's squadron.

In order to give your Lordship every information on this important subject, my Lords have directed me to enclose to you a copy of a paper drawn up by Sir Richard Keats (in 1807), proposing a mode of attacking an enemy's squadron under Isle d'Aix.

I have the honour, to be, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant,
W. W. Pole.

Admiral Lord Gambier off Rochefort.

P.S.—The fire-ships are expected to sail from the Downs to-morrow, and the rocket-ship from the Nore about the same time.

Six additional transports are ordered to be forwarded from Plymouth to your Lordship, and the Board of Ordnance are desired to send a ship with combustible matter sufficient to fit the said transports as fire-ships, and also to put on board her an assortment of carcasses for twenty-four pounders, and of Valenciennes composition, to be used at your Lordship's discretion.

Before I received this letter, and not doubting that the means necessary for assailing the enemy by fire-ships would be afforded me agreeably to my suggestion, I used *every opportunity of making myself acquainted with the impediments of the navigation, by sending the Master of the fleet, and the Master of the 'Caledonia,' to sound and survey the Channel.*

On the 25th, I issued the following General Order to the fleet.

General Order.

If, at any time, one or more of the enemy's ships should take the advantage of a favourable wind and tide, and attempt to pass the fleet, the captains of the ship or ships nearest to which the enemy may pass are immediately to cut or slip in pursuit of them, and use their utmost endeavours to bring the enemy to action; but no greater number than those of the enemy are to continue the pursuit; and if more of the King's ships should have slipped than those of the enemy, the sternmost are either to return,

or anchor again immediately, and show the distinguishing lights when in the presence of the enemy.

Should more than four or five ships of the enemy attempt to pass through the fleet, the Admiral will probably make the signal for the whole fleet to chase, when every ship is instantly to cut or slip their cables.

Should any of the enemy's frigates make the same attempt, the advanced frigates are in like manner to pursue them.

(*Signed*) GAMBIER.

To the respective Captains, &c.

On the 26th March, I received the Admiralty directions of the 19th, above referred to, which I answered as follows:—

'Caledonia,' in Basques Roads, 26th March, 1809.

[Secret.]

Sir,

I have this day received, by the 'Encounter,' your most secret letter of the 19th instant, accompanied by a paper drawn by Sir Richard Keats, with his opinion of the mode of attack upon an enemy's squadron moored under the Isle d'Aix, and signifying the directions of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to me, to take into my consideration the possibility of making an attack upon the enemy's fleet, either conjointly with the line-of-battle ships under my command, and the frigates, small craft, &c., or separately therewith.

You will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that I shall apply all the powers and energy of my mind to carry into effect their directions as far as possible, when the

means, with which their Lordships have ordered me to be furnished, arrive at this anchorage.

I will not, at present, detain the 'Encounter' in her return to Plymouth, but will detach another vessel to-morrow, and will furnish you with a statement of the enemy's force, position, and circumstances, for their Lordships' information. Their ships certainly lie exposed to an attack upon them with fire-vessels, with a hope of success.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*Signed*) GAMBIER.

The Hon. W. W. Pole, &c.

'Caledonia,' in Basques Roads, 26th March, 1809.

[Secret.]

Sir,

In obedience to their Lordships' directions to me, contained in your letter of the 19th instant, I beg leave to state to them that it will be advisable I should be furnished with six gun-brigs, in addition to those that I may be able to collect of such as are under my command; at present, there are only two at this anchorage. I shall, however, order the 'Insolent' and 'Contest' to join me from Quiberon Bay, and I should hope the 'Martial' and 'Fervent' will return here shortly from Plymouth.

It is proper I should state, for their Lordships' information, the position in which the French fleet is at present anchored near to the Isle d'Aix, that their Lordships may be able to form a judgment of the success that may be expected to attend an attack upon the enemy's fleet, in either of the modes directed by their Lordships in your letter to me above mentioned.

The enemy's ships are anchored in two lines, very near to each other, in a direction due S. from the fort on the Isle of Aix, and the ships in each line not farther apart than their own length; by which it appears, as I imagined, that the space for their anchorage is so confined by the shoalness of the water as not to admit of ships to run in and anchor clear of each other.

The most distant ships of their two lines are in point-blank shot of the works upon the Isle of Aix; such ships, therefore, as might attack the enemy, would be exposed to be raked by the hot shot, &c., from the Island; and should the ships be disabled in their masts, they must remain within the range of the enemy's fire until destroyed, there not being a sufficient depth of water to allow them to move to the southward out of distance.

The enemy have taken their position, apparently with the view, not only to be protected by the strong works upon the Isle of Aix, but also to have the entrance to the Charente open to them, that in case of being attacked by fire-ships and other engines of the kind, they can run up the river beyond the reach of them. The tide and wind that are favourable to convey this kind of annoyance to the enemy serve equally to carry them up the river.

With respect to the attempt that may be made to destroy the enemy's ships with shells, &c., I am not competent to give an opinion, until it is ascertained whether the bombs can be placed within range of their mortars to the enemy's ships, without being exposed to the fire from the Isle of Aix.

I beg leave to add that if their Lordships are of opinion that an attack upon the enemy's ships by those of the fleet under my command is practicable, I am ready to obey

any orders they may be pleased to honour me with, however great the risk may be of the loss of men and ships.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) GAMBIER.

The Hon. W. W. Pole.

P.S.—I enclose a statement of the enemy's ships.

Statement of the enemy's force moored at Isle d'Aix anchorage, in two lines, very near to each other, in a direction due S. from the fort on the Isle d'Aix. The ships in each line not farther apart than their own length, and the most distant ships of the two lines, within point-blank shot of the works on that island.

One three-decker, flag at the fore. Ten two-deckers, one a fifty-gun ship, late H.M. ship 'Calcutta,' one flag at the mizen, and one broad pendant. Four frigates.

G.

On the 27th March I went myself in the 'Unicorn,' with Sir Harry Neale, the Captain of the fleet, and Captain Bedford of the 'Caledonia' to reconnoitre the enemy's fleet and the fortifications of the Isle d'Aix, which appeared, (notwithstanding Lord Cochrane seeks by his evidence to make a contrary impression) to be of considerable force.*

Observing that the enemy were resuming their works on the Boyart shoal,† with the view of affording to their fleet

* As testified by Captain Kerr and others. Vide Minutes, also résumé of them.

† These are the works which Lord Dundonald converts into the batteries *on* the Isle d'Aix. Vide Autobiography of a Seaman, also p. 100 of this volume.

in Aix roads additional protection, I sent in the 'Amelia' and 'Conflict' on the 1st of April to disperse the people employed on these works, which service they effected.*

On the 3rd of April, Lord Cochrane arrived with the 'Impérieuse' frigate; and by his Lordship I received the following directions from the Admiralty.

Admiralty Office, 25th March, 1809.

My Lord,

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having thought fit to select Captain Lord Cochrane for the purpose of conducting, under your Lordship's directions, the fire-ships to be employed in the projected attack of the enemy's squadron off Isle d'Aix, I have their Lordships' commands to signify their direction to you to employ Lord Cochrane in the above-mentioned service accordingly, whenever the attack shall take place, and I am to acquaint you that the twelve fire-ships, of which you have already had notice, are now in the Downs in readiness, and detained only by contrary wind, and that Mr. Congreve is also at that anchorage, with an assortment of rockets ready to proceed with the fire-ships. I am also to acquaint you that the composition for the six transports sent to your Lordship by Admiral Young, and 1000 carcasses for 18-pounders, will sail in the course of three or four days from Woolwich to join you off Rochefort.

I have, &c.

W. W. Pole.

To Admiral Lord Gambier.

* Vide evidence of Captain Broughton, also extract from the letter of a French officer on board the 'Océan.'

That the service might proceed with the utmost celerity, I ordered eight of the largest transports then with the fleet to be selected and prepared as fire-ships, in lieu of the six expected from Plymouth; that they might be ready to act with the twelve from Woolwich, immediately upon their arrival. These with the 'Medi tor,' were accordingly fitted by means of rosin and tar fortunately found on board some chasse-marées recently captured, and other combustible materials furnished by the fleet.

This service was performed under the immediate superintendence of the captains of the line-of-battle ships, who evinced the most unremitting activity upon the occasion.

Upon the 10th of April, at 4.30 P.M., the 'Beagle' arrived with the twelve fire-ships from England, when I issued orders to the commanders of sloops, and first lieutenants of line-of-battle ships, to take the command of them, and of the other fire-ships which I had prepared.

It was found altogether impracticable to proceed to the attack on the night of the 10th, though much pressed by Lord Cochrane; and it may be considered a most fortunate circumstance that the attempt was deferred, for it appears, by a General Order found on board one of the enemy's ships,* and now delivered into Court, that the French, to protect their fleet from attack, had equipped seventy-three launches and other boats, in five divisions, to guard it from surprise during the night, and to tow off our fire-ships on their approach; and the tranquillity of the night of the 10th would have afforded the enemy full opportunity of availing themselves of this protection; but of this they

* Vide Appendix No. 4 to the Minutes.

were deprived by the very blowing weather on the subsequent night, when the fire-ships were sent in.*

I have here to notice that, some days previous to the attack, I had, to deceive the enemy, adopted the precaution of ordering out of the Roads the vessels of every description that were not to be engaged in the intended operations.

To assist and support the fire-ships, the following disposition was made of the whole force, in frigates and small vessels:—

The 'Unicorn,' 'Aigle' and 'Pallas,' I directed to take a station near the Boyart shoal, for the purpose of receiving the crews of the fire-ships on their return from the enterprise, to support the boats of the fleet which were to accompany the fire-ships, and likewise to give assistance to the 'Impérieuse,' which ship was somewhat further advanced. The 'Whiting' schooner, and the 'King George' and 'Nimrod' cutters, were fitted for throwing rockets, and were also directed to take a station near that shoal. The 'Indefatigable,' the 'Foxhound' sloop, and 'Etna' (being the only bomb-vessel that had then arrived) were ordered to place themselves as near the Fort on the Isle of Aix as possible; the two former to protect the bomb, whilst she threw shells into the fort.

The 'Emerald,' 'Dotterel' and 'Beagle,' sloops, and 'Insolent,' 'Conflict' and 'Growler,' gun-brigs, were stationed to make a diversion at the east end of the Isle of Aix. The 'Redpole' and 'Lyra' I directed to be anchored by the Master of the Fleet, one near the Isle of Aix, and the other near the Boyart, with lights hoisted, and pro-

* Vide extract from French officer's letter.

perly screened from the enemy's view, to guide the fire-ships in their course to the attack.

Three explosion-vessels, which had been proposed and prepared by Lord Cochrane, were, under his Lordship's immediate direction, to precede the fire-ships in the attack. Their explosion was to point out the proper time for the officers commanding the fire-ships to set fire to their respective vessels, and to intimidate and prevent the enemy from towing off the fire-ships. The boats of the fleet, under the superintendence of Rear-Admiral Stopford, were ordered to assemble alongside the 'Cæsar,' to proceed to assist the fire-ships, and I issued the following General Order, and gave the officers commanding fire-ships full instructions for their proceedings.

Mem. General.

'Caledonia' in Basques Roads, 11th April, 1809.

The fire-ships are to proceed to the attack the ensuing night. The exploding vessels will close with the 'Impérieuse.' The fire-vessels will move from their anchors at half-past seven o'clock. In running in they are to leave the two lights of equal height (which will be shown on board a vessel placed for that purpose) on the starboard hand; and to leave the two lights perpendicular (which will also be shown on board another vessel placed for that purpose) on the larboard hand.

The frigates, &c., which are to protect and receive the officers and crews of the fire-ships, will show four lights perpendicular; and the 'Impérieuse' will probably anchor near the Boyart, and show five lights perpendicularly.

If the wind should shift before the fire-ships proceed to

the attack, or from other circumstances, it should be postponed, the 'Caledonia,' or the 'Impérieuse,' will fire a gun, and show three lights in a perpendicular position.

(Signed) GAMBIER.

To the respective Captains, &c.

With these preconcerted arrangements, the fleet was at this time unmoored, in readiness to render any service that might be practicable; but being unavoidably anchored in a strong tide-way, with the wind blowing hard from the N.W., upon the weather tide making, it was again moored, to prevent the ships falling on board* each other.

At about half-past eight P.M., the explosion-vessels and fire-ships proceeded to the attack, at half-past nine two of the explosion-vessels blew up, and at ten most of the fire-ships were observed to be on fire the enemy's forts and ships firing on them. Many of the fire-ships were seen to drive through the fleet,† and beyond the Isle of Aix. The night was extremely dark; it blew a strong gale, with a high sea, and the service thereby became of such increased hazard as scarcely to admit of a hope of the officers and men ever returning.‡

It is right I should here observe that, although from these and other untoward circumstances, several of the fire-ships failed in their object, I could not discover (after the fullest investigation) that blame was imputable to any of the officers who commanded them.

* Vide evidence of Mr. Stokes, &c., Minutes, p. 156, also résumé of the Minutes.

† Vide Despatch of Admiral Allemand, &c.

‡ Vide evidence of Admiral Stopford. Minutes, p. 90.

The explosion-vessels, conducted by Lord Cochrane in person, also failed in their object,* as will be seen by reference to the small chart I now deliver into Court, which points out where two of them blew up. The third broke adrift and did not explode.

The situation in which, and the time when these vessels blew up, proved prejudicial to the enterprise in several respects. Their premature explosion, contrary to the expressed intention of Lord Cochrane, that they should blow up in the midst of the enemy's boats, to deter them from towing off our fire-ships in their approach, served as a warning to the enemy, whose ships were observed instantly to show lights; and several of the officers who commanded the fire-ships, not doubting that the explosion had taken place near to the enemy's fleet, steered their ships and set them on fire accordingly, by which means several were in flames at a greater distance from the enemy than was intended, and so as to endanger our advanced frigates. In fact, had not Captain Wooldrige, and some of the other officers, wholly disregarding the explosion, taken their fire-ships in a proper direction† for the enemy, it is more than probable than none of them would have produced any effect whatever on the enemy's fleet.

But although not one of the enemy's ships was actually destroyed by means of fire-ships, yet the terror excited by their approach induced the enemy to cut their cables,

* Vide Captain Proteau's Journal, also evidence of Mr. Fairfax, Minutes, p. 184.

† By the Advice of Mr. Fairfax who hailed them. Vide Minutes, p. 183, also p. 129 of this vol.

and exposed them, by their running aground, to the attack which ensued.*

I now come to the proceedings of the 12th of April, which commence with the signal that the enemy could be destroyed; and which destruction it is imputed to me I delayed or neglected.

At 5.48 A.M. the 'Impérieuse,' then about three miles from the enemy, and about the same distance from the 'Caledonia,' made the signal to me by telegraph, that "seven of the enemy's ships were on shore, and that half the fleet could destroy them."

The actual situation of the French fleet at that time was this: Seven of their ships were on shore in the Palles, two had escaped towards the Charente, and two lay either at their original anchorage, or a very little removed from it, with their broadsides bearing upon anything that might approach to attack the ships on shore.†

I ordered the fleet to be unmoored immediately;‡ the wind was at N.W.,§ and the tide was then nearly at the last quarter ebb,‖ and much too far spent to admit of a force being sent in so as to effect anything, with the possibility of returning in case of disaster, before the making of the flood, which would effectually have locked up our ships within the enemy's confined anchorage,¶ during the whole of that tide. Here they would

* Vide evidence of French officers, &c.

† Vide General Evidence.

‡ Vide log of the 'Caledonia.'

§ Evidence of Messrs. Stokes, Fairfax, &c.

‖ Ibid.

¶ General Evidence.

have been exposed, not only to the point-blank shot of the batteries, but also to the broadsides of the above mentioned two line-of-battle ships, then lying in Aix Road, and which, even without assistance from the batteries, must have entirely crippled* every one of our ships in their approach through so narrow a channel, besides which, some of the grounded ships were sufficiently upright, and so situated as to enable them to bring their guns to bear upon the entrance.

I would here submit to the Court whether the idea which appears to have been entertained by Lord Cochrane, that a force could have been sent in so as to have arrived before low water in the morning, was not in itself preposterous and impracticable.†

Upon the fullest consideration that no possible attempt could be made until the tide had flowed for some time, unless a previous change of wind should take place, all I had to do was to make every *preparation* for the attack on the enemy's grounded ships; accordingly I made the signal for the fleet to weigh, and the Rear-Admiral and Captains being assembled on board the 'Caledonia,'‡ I gave orders to the Commander of the 'Etna,'§ the only bomb present, to proceed, as soon as the tide would permit that vessel to approach near enough, to bombard the enemy's ships. I at the same time ordered the 'Insolent,' 'Conflict,' and 'Growler,' gun-brigs, to accompany her,‖ and directed the Captains of the 'Va-

* General Evidence.

† And unsupported by a single witness. Vide Minutes.

‡ Vide evidence of Admiral Stopford, &c.

§ Vide Captain Godfrey's evidence, Minutes, also p. 135 of this volume.

‖ Ibid.

liant,'* 'Bellona,'† and 'Revenge,'‡ with the frigates,§ to take an advanced anchorage, as near as possible to the Boyart shoal, to be in readiness to proceed to the attack, as soon as the water had sufficiently flowed to enable them to do so. At between nine and ten A.M., which was much before the flood was sufficiently made to commence effective operations, the fleet ran in, and came to an anchor within about three miles distant from the enemy's fortress of Aix;‖ the three ships before mentioned, with the frigates, anchored about a mile nearer to the Boyart; but the bomb and brigs did not come to.

As the flood-tide made, three of the seven ships which had grounded on the Palles shoal, and were the farthest from us, being lightened, succeeded in warping off, and made for the Charente.¶

The two line-of-battle ships still at their anchorage, in the situation before described, took, at the same time, advantage of the flood, and proceeded likewise towards that river.**

Most if not all of these five ships now ran aground at the mouth of the Charente, and were never assailable.††

These movements of the enemy's ships were not, as I submit to the Court, to be prevented by any means that I could adopt, with the smallest chance of success, and without His Majesty's ships being put to the most

* Vide evidence of Captain Bligh.

† Evidence of Captain Douglas.

‡ Evidence of Captain Kerr.

§ Vide evidence of Captain Rodd and other captains of frigates. Minutes.

‖ General Evidence.

¶ Ibid. ** Ibid. †† Ibid.

unwarrantable peril,* and when, as Rear-Admiral Stopford has, in his evidence on the part of the prosecution, most emphatically described, "Ours would have been all the loss, and the enemy's all the advantage.†

The wind blew directly in, so that in the event of our ships being crippled while the flood-tide was running, which appeared inevitable, it would have been impossible for them to have worked out, or to have retreated to an anchorage out of the reach of the enemy's shot and shells, the consequence of which could scarcely have been less than their utter destruction.‡

These serious impediments induced me to delay the attack *until the latter part of the flood, in order to give any ships, which might be disabled on their approach, a chance of returning by means of the receding tide.*

Had the wind been favourable for sailing both in and out, or even the latter only, there could have been no doubt that the sooner the enemy's ships were attacked the better.

And I think the Court will allow that I am completely borne out in what I have stated by the sentiments which it will be proved were expressed to me by Lord Cochrane, when he came on board the 'Caledonia' after the action, that had I acted upon his signal, and sent in at that time half the fleet, *he calculated upon the loss of three or four of His Majesty's line-of-battle ships.*§ And I have moreover to observe, that if, in defiance of the obstruction of

* General Evidence.

† Admiral Stopford's Evidence, p. 226 of this volume.

‡ General Evidence.

§ Vide evidence of Captains Beresford and Bligh, and Mr. Wilkinson, Minutes, pp. 162, 169, 185, also p. 213 &c. of this vol.

the other ships of the enemy, I had sent in a force before the three ships had warped off the Palles shoal, it is a positive fact that it could not have advanced to the attack of those three ships on account of the shoal water.*

It appears by the log-book of the 'Impérieuse,' that at 11.30 she weighed, and ran in company with the 'Etna,' bomb, and a gun-brig. The fact is that the 'Etna' passed the 'Impérieuse' whilst at anchor about one,† and that she began the attack some time before the 'Impérieuse' arrived up;‡ half an hour afterwards the 'Impérieuse' and 'Beagle' followed the 'Etna' and gun-brigs into the attack, and between ten minutes before and seven minutes after two, as will be seen by a reference to the log-books upon the table, I ordered the 'Indefatigable' 'Unicorn,' 'Aigle' and 'Emerald' frigates, with the 'Valiant' and 'Revenge' (and the 'Pallas' a few minutes later) to weigh, Captain Bligh, the senior officer, having, some hours before, received my directions for his proceeding against the enemy.§

The 'Impérieuse' opened her fire at about twenty minutes after two, the 'Aigle' at three, and the other ships as soon as the flowing tide permitted.

In consequence of strong north-westerly winds, the flood-tide continued running until past three in the afternoon,‖ which Lord Cochrane has not noticed in his evidence.

* Vide General Evidence.

† Vide evidence of Captain Godfrey, p. 178-9.

‡ Ibid.

§ Vide evidence of Captain Bligh, Admiral Stopford, &c., p. 238 of Minutes, and p. 213 of this vol.

‖ Vide evidence of Mr. Fairfax, Minutes, p. 146, p. 211 of this volume.

In my letter of the 10th May to the Admiralty, I could not state these circumstances so minutely as I am now enabled to do, by a reference since made to the log-books. At 4.10 p.m. the enemy's ship 'Calcutta,' and the 'Ville de Varsovie' and 'Aquilon' about an hour after, were taken possession of by the boats of the advanced squadron, and set on fire as soon as the prisoners were removed; a short time after, 'Le Tonnerre' was burnt by the enemy.* This ship is admitted, by the evidence of Lord Cochrane,† to have been out of the reach of our fire, and it is a notorious fact that the three-decker and the other two ships that got afloat had been aground at some distance beyond the 'Tonnerre.'‡

In this manner, the Court will find that the four ships capable of being attacked at the time the signal was made (if the 'Tonnerre' may be so considered, of which I doubt) were completely destroyed, the other three of the seven first on shore never having, as I have already stated, been in a situation to be assailed.

And I venture most positively to assert, *that the destruction of these ships would not have been effected if I had not delayed the attack until the time I did.*§

* Log of 'Caledonia.'

† "Our shot did not reach the 'Tonnerre.'" Evidence of Lord Cochrane. Minutes p. 85.

‡ *Q.*—Were the three ships of the enemy that were on shore upon the Palles, and which afterwards got off, at any time in a position to be attacked by us?

A.—Certainly not. They were advanced farther than the 'Tonnerre;' and the 'Revenge's' shot just reached the 'Tonnerre.'—Evidence of Captain Kerr. Minutes, p. 173.

§ It is my firm belief that, had ships gone in sooner, they would have been crippled; by which means the French ships (I mean

At the close of the afternoon I judged it advisable to attempt to follow up our success by an attack upon the five ships that had escaped to the mouth of the Charente, which I thought it might be possible to effect during the night,* I therefore sent Rear-Admiral Stopford, in the 'Cæsar,' with the 'Theseus,' and the fire-ships,† and boats of the fleet, with Mr. Congreve's rockets, and gave the Rear-Admiral discretional orders to proceed as far as he should judge proper, and for his applying that force as he should think fit, and according as circumstances should render it expedient.

Scarcely had the 'Cæsar' reached Aix Road before she grounded,‡ and lay in a very perilous situation (as has been deposed by the Rear-Admiral) exposed also to the point-blank shot from the batteries.

The Rear-Admiral perceiving that nothing could be effected by the line-of-battle ships, all of which had grounded (as had also some of the frigates), and that they lay in imminent danger, and satisfied that if anything further could be effected towards the destruction of these ships, it could only be by smaller vessels, he therefore, very judiciously, before daylight on the 13th, availed himself of a providential shift of wind, which enabled him, when the

the two that remained afloat) would have discovered the strength of their position, of course remained instead of going up the river, and prevented the four ships that were afterwards destroyed from being so.—Evidence of Captain Kerr and others, &c. Minutes, p. 173.

* Evidence of those officers.

† Three vessels had been prepared as such in the course of the day by the ships of the squadron.—Vide evidence of Captain Bligh. Log of the 'Caledonia,' &c.

‡ Evidence of Admiral Stopford. Minutes, p. 81.

line-of-battle ships floated, to extricate them from that danger, and to return to Basques Roads.*

Captain Bligh,† of the 'Valiant,' also on his return, reported to me that it was found impracticable to destroy the three-decked ship, and others which were lying at the entrance of the Charente, as the former (which was the outer one) was protected by three lines of boats placed in advance from her.

In addition to the incontestible proofs already adduced of the impracticability of effecting any further destruction of the enemy's fleet, I will advert to the high professional character of Rear-Admiral Stopford, and Captains Beresford, Bligh, and Kerr, who cannot for an instant be supposed likely to omit any circumstance that could effect the object for which they were sent by me into Aix Roads, and I am morally certain that they did not withdraw their ships until it was wholly impracticable to annoy the enemy farther, or until it appeared to those officers that the destruction of their own ships would be the certain consequence of their longer continuance in Aix Roads.

Lord Cochrane remained in the Road of Aix, during the 13th and 14th, accompanied by the 'Pallas' frigate, the sloops, and gun-brigs, and 'Etna' bomb, but nothing was attempted by the frigates.‡

* Evidence of Admiral Stopford. Minutes, p. 80 and 81.

† Evidence of Captain Bligh. Minutes, pp. 159 and 160.

‡ Lord Cochrane's evidence. Minutes, p. 64, also p. 154 of this volume, also General Evidence.

"I did not think the going in of the frigates [on the 13th and 14th] would produce any good effect."—Evidence of Captain Seymour of the 'Pallas.'

During the 13th the 'Etna' was employed in throwing shells—the 'Whiting' schooner in firing rockets, and the other small vessels firing upon the enemy's ships on shore, when the tide permitted them to approach.*

On the 14th, having, by signal, directed the 'Impérieuse' to join me,† I ordered Captain Wolfe, of the 'Aigle,'‡ to take command of the small vessels advanced; these, with the 'Etna,' continued firing on the enemy's ships at the entrance of the Charente, as opportunity offered, during the remainder of the day, but without effect.

On the 15th, I despatched Sir Harry Neale§ to their Lordships, in the 'Impérieuse,' with my public letter on the 12th of April, giving an account of the service which had been performed.

From the 15th to the 24th the attack on the enemy's ships on shore at the mouth of the Charente was continued by the bombs (the 'Thunder' having arrived on the 19th), assisted by the small vessels, as wind and weather permitted, but the enemy had, by throwing overboard their guns and stores, got so high up that even the gun-brigs and other vessels of light draught frequently grounded in their endeavour to approach, and never could get sufficiently near to produce any effect.‖

* General Evidence.

† Lord Cochrane's evidence, logs, &c.

‡ Captain Wolfe's evidence. Minutes, p. 215.

Q.—Is the 'Aigle' a ship of equal force or nearly equal force to the 'Impérieuse,' so as to be as well calculated to destroy the enemy as the 'Impérieuse' would have been?

A.—Yes, she is.—Evidence of Sir Harry Neale. Minutes, p. 193.

§ Vide Minutes, Appendix, No. 7, &c.

‖ Captain Newcombe's evidence. Minutes, p. 209.

The orders of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to me of the 14th April, to detach two squadrons, of four ships of the line each, to cruise for the purpose of intercepting the French ships which had escaped from L'Orient in February, having, with the other orders which I received from their Lordships, between the 17th March and 29th of April, been read upon opening the Court,* I take occasion to observe, that I had anticipated the orders of their Lordships in this respect, and the success in the operations of the 12th, *without the loss of any of the King's ships, having enabled me to do so, I had previously appointed two squadrons for that service,* one of which had *actually sailed* before I received the orders of their Lordships thereupon.

From the 24th to the 29th of April, nothing material occurred, and having received the Admiralty letter of the 22nd of April, signifying, "that their Lordships considering the state of the enemy's force, in consequence of the brilliant success† of the fleet under my command, so much reduced as to render my further presence, unnecessary, directed me to repair to Spithead in the 'Caledonia.'" I accordingly completed the arrangements of the fleet, and proceeded in the 'Caledonia' to England on the 29th of April.

Previous to my leaving Basques Roads, one of the enemy's frigates was set on fire by themselves at the entrance of the Charente,‡ another was observed to be wrecked farther up that river. The number of ships that escaped without injury did not, from the best information,

* Vide Minutes.

† Minutes, p. 26.

‡ 'Indienne.' General Evidence.

exceed one or two line-of-battle ships and two frigates;* what may have been the fate of the remainder I leave to be considered by the members of this honourable Court, who are well qualified to judge of the condition of ships which had been so long and so repeatedly aground.†

By the foregoing narrative, as well as by the log and signal-books of the 'Caledonia' (to which, as also to every correct log of the fleet, I am as desirous to refer as Lord Cochrane may be) it will, I conceive, be seen that I fully meet the charge which has been preferred against me; and if the impression arising out of this inquiry should prove less favourable to Lord Cochrane than that which may have been produced by my letters to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, of the 14th of April, his Lordship must be sensible that, as the instigator of this Court-Martial, he will himself have been the cause of this change of sentiment. I have been willing to grant to his Lordship the fullest credit for his personal bravery, and for his judicious manner of approaching the enemy in the 'Impérieuse,' to which points the commendation expressed in my letter of the 14th of April related; for, in fact, the success of the first part of the enterprise, as I have before observed, arose from the terror excited by the appearance of the fire-ships, as they failed in the principal effect they were intended to produce, and the blast of the explosion-vessels under his Lordship's immediate direction did not take place by any means so near to the enemy's ships as his Lordship had projected; the general result, however, of the attack was so successful, that, under that impression, I did not hesitate to express, in my public letter,

* Vide French accounts.

† Minutes, p. 213, also French accounts.

the degree of approbation which is therein marked, passing over circumstances *not altogether satisfactory to me*, and not at that time necessary to be brought into public notice.

The Court is now in possession of all the facts and circumstances on which I rest my justification, and it remains to be considered how far they are effected by the evidence produced on the part of the prosecution.

I have, first, to refer to the evidence of the second in command, and to that of the captains of two of the frigates engaged in the attack, viz., the Rear-Admiral Stopford, and Captains Rodd and Wolfe.

These officers, far from supporting any part of the charge made against me, have *distinctly denied* there having been any neglect, delay, or deficiency, in any part of my conduct in Basque Roads; and I am persuaded that, had the prosecutor* called all the other witnesses summoned upon the trial, a corresponding testimony would have been given by each of them.

I have next to refer to the evidence of the log and signal books of the fleet, on which the charge purports to be founded; and I must here beg to call your attention to the very unusual circumstance of their being already on your table two log-books of the same ship (namely, the 'Impérieuse'), and materially differing from each other; one of them produced by the Master of the 'Impérieuse,' as the authentic public document of that ship, to the accuracy of which he has deposed, and the other presented

* Solicitor for the Admiralty. It must here be remembered that the Defence, though here placed last for the sake of perspicuity, was really delivered before any of the witnesses called by the accused had given their evidence.

by Lord Cochrane, and admitted by his Lordship to be a compilation by himself in London, from materials which are not produced to the Court.*

In addition to these circumstances, I have to lay upon your table a third paper, purporting to be also a log-book of the 'Impérieuse,' but differing from the two already before you. This paper was delivered to me by Lord Cochrane, in obedience to my orders of 12th May last, to furnish me "with a copy of the books of logs and signals of His Majesty's ship 'Impérieuse,' under his command from 11th to 15th April, inclusive," and to this log the Court will find affixed his Lordship's signature.†

The Court itself having so attentively inspected the Master's log,‡ I need not point out the alterations evidently made therein; and it cannot fail to observe the variations in the other two logs.

I must, however, remark that, among the deviations in these pages from the ship's original log, the signal immediately in question, which is recorded in the latter to have been for "half the fleet," stands in both these compilations as having been made for "part of the fleet" only;§ and of the two logs received from Lord Cochrane,

* "The original I do not recollect whether I have."—Lord Cochrane's evidence. Minutes, p. 40, also p. 196 of this volume.

† Copies of these three logs will be found in the Appendix to the Minutes.

‡ *Admiral Stanhope.*—I cannot help observing that there appear to have been some very important omissions, which are *afterwards entered in several parts*—several very material circumstances. Minutes, p. 30.

§ Lord Cochrane, in his evidence, admits that the signal actually made was for *half* the fleet.

that only produced in Court by himself records the circumstance of his having hailed the 'Indefatigable,' and proposed to her a joint attack upon the enemy's ship, the 'Océan;'* and I cannot help here reminding the Court of the application made by the Master of the 'Impérieuse' for access to the 'Indefatigable's' log.†

I beg leave to submit whether documents formed some time after the events they record took place, and so contrary to the practice of the Navy, can be deemed authentic, or ought to be referred to as, or in support of, evidence before this Court.

I have no doubt the signal made by Lord Cochrane on the morning of the 12th April, which forms a part of the charge against me, will, combined with other subsequent signals, appear to the Court unprecedented and improper; of this his Lordship now seems aware, from the manner in which he has expressed himself in his evidence,‡ and that there may be no doubt of the accuracy of the signal log-book of the 'Caledonia,' I must again call before you the signal officer, to show that the signal of recall on the 13th April, said to have been observed by the 'Impérieuse,'§ was never made by the 'Caledonia,' and also that the

* Which is denied by the Captain of the 'Indefatigable.' Vide Minutes, pp. 101—2.

† And admitted by him in his evidence. Minutes, pp. 30, 31, 32.

‡ "These signals I must explain, because I really did not intend to make such signals," &c.—Lord Cochrane's evidence. Minutes, p. 47.

§ Evidence of Lord Cochrane. Minutes, pp. 61, 63, 64. Logs of 'Caledonia,' and logs 1, 2 and 3, of the 'Impérieuse.' Appendix to the Minutes. Evidence of Lieutenant Hockings and Mr. Sparshot. Minutes, pp. 181, 189, also p. 151 of this vol.

signal of the 14th, recorded in the 'Caledonia's' log as made by the 'Impérieuse,' that, "if permitted to remain, can destroy the enemy," is denied by Lord Cochrane ever to have been made.*

I have yet to call the attention of the Court to the plan drawn by Lord Cochrane of the position of the enemy's ships as they lay aground on the morning of the 12th April, and to that position marked upon the chart verified by Mr. Stokes; the former laid down from uncertain data—the latter from angles measured,† and other observations made upon the spot; the difference between the two is too apparent to escape the notice of the Court, and the respective merits of these charts will not, I think, admit of a comparison.

The accuracy attributed by Lord Cochrane to the French charts will, I doubt not, seem very extraordinary, after it shall be shown in evidence that his Lordship has expressed a very opposite opinion.‡

It now only remains for me to examine in what manner Lord Cochrane has attempted, by his unsupported opinion, to maintain the charge. This is to be collected from the long narrated evidence given by his Lordship. It cannot, I am sure, be deemed necessary for me to follow him through the whole of this evidence. There are, however, some parts of it that require particular animadversion.

In the course of his evidence, Lord Cochrane, in allusion

* Evidence of Lord Cochrane. Minutes, pp 63, 64, also p. 192 of this vol.

† Minutes, pp. 27, 28, 143, 144, 145 and 146, and 153, &c.

‡ His Lordship replied the chart was not to be depended upon. I was speaking of a French chart [Neptune Français].—Evidence of Sir Harry Neale, p. 193, also p. 120 of this volume.

to the danger which would attend his going without encouragement to the attack of the ships at the mouth of the Charente,* says, speaking of himself, "a heavy, *very heavy* responsibility would lie upon my shoulders in case of disasters, which, in military operations, are sometimes unavoidable; if I had my cable shot away, for instance, I might have been sunk."† Yet, whilst, on the one hand, his Lordship seems to have been so sensible of the weight of responsibility imposed upon himself by the command of a frigate and a few small vessels, he appears, on the other, to have been unmindful of the far heavier degree of responsibility attached to my command during so complicated an undertaking; in alluding to the dangers of which, I must take this opportunity to mention five furnaces for heating shot, which Lord Cochrane reported to me to have himself discovered, when he went in to reconnoitre, previous to the attack.‡

Lord Cochrane states that 74 gun ships may go into an inner anchorage, between the Boyart shoal and the Palles, at any time of tide.§ He asserts, also, that the tide rises only from ten to twelve feet.‖ By the French chart, which he produced to *confirm his deposition*, it appears that there is a bank to pass over before ships can get into that anchorage, with from eighteen to twenty feet at low

* On the 13th.

† Lord Cochrane's evidence. Minutes, p. 67.

‡ Also to Sir Harry Neale. Minutes, p. 194, also p. 120 of this volume.

§ Lord Cochrane's evidence, also p. 206 of this volume.

‖ Ibid. Minutes, p. 74. The Commander-in-chief had the same charts, I believe, as I was in possession of.—Lord Cochrane's evidence.

water. But by the charts of the Master of the fleet, and Master of the 'Caledonia,' *who sounded upon the bank*,* it appears that there is only from fourteen to nineteen feet, and the bank full of knolls. Under these circumstances, if Lord Cochrane's opinion be correct, relative to the rise and fall of the tide, no man, in his senses, would venture a 74 over it, even in the smoothest water, at less than three-quarter flood, and therefore, as to the refuge that this inner anchorage† would afford a crippled ship, how little would the probability be that the opportunity of both tide and wind should offer for a crippled ship, at the moment it was most wanted, to pass over the bank, and get out of the reach of the batteries;‡ but if I had even previously known as much of this anchorage as I now do, I would not, as the wind was at the time, have done otherwise than I did; and if Lord Cochrane really knew what he has now professed to have known, when he was in Aix Road, it was a duty imperiously incumbent upon him to have communicated that information, on the afternoon of the 12th, to the captains of the line-of-battle ships which he saw in so perilous a situation, aground, within point-blank range of the batteries.§

* Vide evidence of Stokes and Fairfax, p. 207—9 of this volume.

† La Grande Trousse spoken of by Captain Broughton, Mr. Spurling, Fairfax, Stokes, p. 208 of this volume. Also evidence of Admiral Stopford and other captains. Résumé of evidence in this vol.

‡ Ibid.

§ Lord Cochrane's evidence. Minutes, p. 63—4, also p. 119 of this volume.

He [the Master of the 'Revenge,' applied to his Lordship [Cochrane] to know whether he knew of a depth of water to place the ship; and he said *he did not know*, he *believed* up to windward. —Captain Kerr of the 'Revenge.' Minutes, p. 218. [I

Lord Cochrane has expressed an opinion that two or three sail of the line, sent in on the morning of the 12th, might, by running up on the verge of the Boyart shoal, have passed to leeward of the two French ships remaining at anchor.* This I declare to have been absolutely impracticable, as well from the raking fire of the two ships afloat, of the upright ones on shore, in our approach, and the fire of the batteries, as from the shoal water close under their lee. The testimony of Captain Rodd, the only witness examined on this point, on the part of the prosecution, corroborates my opinion, which, I have no doubt, will be further supported by the evidence of other competent witnesses† whom I propose calling.

With respect to the force of the Aix batteries, I apprehend what appeared to Lord Cochrane, and to the Master of his ship, as ruins of the fort, were, in fact, materials for improving or increasing the works;‡ indeed, can it be natural to suppose that the enemy, who are so active in forming batteries wherever they can be useful, and whose engineers are considered to be equal to any, would, of all moments, choose that for dismantling or blowing up works

I felt the situation of the ship to be dangerous, and sent the master to sound round. On his return he told me that Lord Cochrane had informed him he did not know, but that he believed there was water to windward.

Q.—To windward was to the northward?

A.—Yes, under the batteries.—Minutes, p. 212, also p. 119 of this volume.

* Minutes, p. 53, 54.

† General Evidence, from the résumé of the Court-Martial, in this volume.

‡ Evidence of Captains Bligh, Douglas and other captains examined on this point. Minutes, p. 163, 164, &c. also Résumé.

when they expected those works would be most required; for it is very certain the enemy was as fully apprized of our intentions of attacking their fleet as myself;* and it will, perhaps, be considered less likely that the enemy should weaken their defences on the Isle d'Aix, raised evidently for the protection of their fleet, when, at the same time, they were endeavouring to form others on the Boyart shoal,† as a further protection for it.

Relative to the service that had been performed, and what might possibly be still further attempted, towards the destruction of the enemy's ships, Lord Cochrane states a conversation to have passed between his Lordship and myself, on his return from Aix Roads, in which he represents me to have said, "that if he threw blame, it would appear like arrogantly claiming all the merit to himself."

I, however, trust that the Court will not conceive that the expression of casting blame has any allusion to my conduct, for, as I have before said, Lord Cochrane never expressed one syllable from which I could form the most faint idea that he felt disappointed at anything resting with me;‡ his Lordship's allusion had reference only to the several officers who acted with him in Aix Roads, upon whom, generally,§ he cast blame, without giving the smallest intimation, either by word or manner, that, in his expressions of dissatisfaction, he included his Commander-in-chief.

* And also expected an attack by land. Vide French accounts, &c.

† Which Defences were destroyed by the 'Amelia,' April 3rd, as already mentioned at p. 100 of this vol.

‡ Evidence of Mr. Wilkinson who was present. Minutes, p. 185, also p. 235 of this vol.

§ Ibid.

By the manner in which Lord Cochrane has expressed himself, it might, perhaps, be concluded that I had been desirous he should bear my despatches to England, and after the caution he represents me to have given him, it might, if I allowed this statement to pass uncontradicted, be supposed by some that I proposed this as an inducement to secure Lord Cochrane's silence, whereas, when his Lordship recalls the circumstances to his mind, it will, I am sure, lead him to acknowledge that, far from pressing this service upon him, I, in the first instance, gave him to understand* that Sir Harry Neale, the Captain of the fleet, was to bear my despatches, and at which Lord Cochrane, I positively declare, expressed evident marks of dissatisfaction; and it certainly will appear, to every reflecting mind, that my sending his Lordship to England, with orders to go to the Admiralty, betrayed no desire of concealment, nor apprehension of any representation Lord Cochrane might make of my conduct.†

Upon a general review of the evidence of Lord Cochrane, it will appear that his Lordship has founded his statement‡ on the narrative log compiled since his return to England, on the French chart, and on the position

* As seen in Lord Gambier's letter to Lord Cochrane of April 13th. "I wish you to join me as soon as possible, that you may convey Sir Harry Neale to England, who will be charged with my despatches—or *you may return to carry on the service where you are*, &c." Minutes, p. 64, also p. 152 of this vol.

† "And I beg leave to refer their Lordships to him [Sir Harry Neale], *as also to Lord Cochrane*, for any further particulars of which they may wish to be informed."—Lord Gambier's Despatch of April 14th. Minutes, p. 8, also p. 106 of this vol.

‡ Vide his evidence.

in which is placed, in his own chart, the enemy's several ships aground, and the two ships which remained at the anchorage on the morning of the 12th.

When it is considered how essentially this log differs from the ship's log, and both of them from the document Lord Cochrane has furnished me with, I conceive not much credit can be given to either.*

With regard to the reliance to be placed on the French chart,† I have already observed that Lord Cochrane declared, before the attack, that it was incorrect.‡

With respect to the position of the enemy's ships on the morning of the 12th of April, after their dispersion, it is so widely different from that in which they are placed in the chart which has been delivered in by the Master of the 'Caledonia,' and will be verified by the Master of the fleet, that it is hardly to be supposed they relate to the same transaction, and it is very fair here to remark the fact acknowledged by Lord Cochrane, in his evidence,§

* Appendix to Minutes, 1, 2, 3.

† Proved incorrect by Messrs. Raven, Stokes, Fairfax and others. Vide Evidence.

‡ Evidence of Sir Harry Neale, before quoted.

§ "They [the enemy's fleet] appeared to be moored, as near as I could judge, north and south, or nearly so. I thought at first they inclined considerably more to the north-east and south-west."—Lord Cochrane's evidence. Minutes, p. 37.

Q.—Show upon the chart the position in which Lord Cochrane placed them [the French ships] in consequence of his having reconnoitered previous to the 11th of April?

A.—Nearly E.N.E. and W.S.W. by compass, to the best of my recollection. If they had been attacked in that way, it is impossible that above two of the ships could have driven on shore by the fire-vessels. [*Q.*

that he erred no less than five points of the compass in the report he made to me before the attack, of the direction in which the French fleet was moored in two lines from the fort of Isle d'Aix.

Lord Cochrane has thought fit to represent that the enemy's three grounded ships, which escaped from off the shoal of the Palles, were lying so near together as to give two of them, which he states to be heeling inwards, the appearance of their masts and yards locking; this description of them is certainly well calculated to make a strong impression of their defenceless state; but whatever may have been their appearance to his Lordship, such is not the fact; for, in reality, they were lying perfectly separate and clear of each other, as is shown by the afore-mentioned chart, produced by the Master of the 'Caledonia,' as will also be proved by evidence. But whatever their situation might have been with respect to proximity, I must here repeat that they could never have been approached by our ships within the reach of our shot, as Lord Cochrane has allowed in regard of the 'Tonnerre,' which was nearer to our attacking force than either of the three ships in question.*

Q.—How many points do you differ from Lord Cochrane?

A.—I think it was five points. Lord Gambier, when I was introduced to Lord Cochrane, pointed out the difference of the reconnoitering, and said the attack must be very different if I was right in my positions, from the lines being so very much at variance. Lord Cochrane acquiesced, and Sir Harry Neale advised Lord Cochrane to go to the situation that I had to convince himself that he had been wrong; which I believe he did.—Evidence of Mr. Fairfax. Minutes, p. 145.

* General Evidence.

It now only remains for me to request the attention of the Court to some conclusions which I think may be drawn from the whole of the statement I have submitted to the consideration of you, Sir, and the rest of the members of this honourable Court; and by which, with the additional evidence I have to adduce, it will, I flatter myself, distinctly appear,

1st. That, during the whole of this service, the most unwearied attention was applied by me to its main object, the destruction of the enemy's fleet.*

2ndly. That in no part of the service was more zeal and exertion shown than during the whole of the 12th of April, when I had necessarily in view two objects, the destruction of the enemy's fleet, and also the preservation of that under my command; for the extreme difficulties in approaching an enemy closely surrounded by shoals, and strongly defended by batteries, rendered caution in my proceedings peculiarly necessary.†

3rdly. That three out of seven of the enemy's ships aground on the Palles were, from their first being on shore, totally out of the reach of the guns of any ships of the fleet that might have been sent in; and that at no time whatever, either sooner or later, could they have been attacked.‡

4thly. That the other four of the seven ships of which the enemy's fleet consisted were never in a

* Proved in evidence. Vide Minutes—also résumé of the same in this vol.

† Proved by the evidence.

‡ Ibid.

situation to be assailed after the fire-ships had failed in their main object.*

These are the points on which I rest my justification, trusting that it will appear to the Court, upon their review of my whole case, that I did take the most effectual measures for destroying the enemy's fleet; that neither neglect nor unnecessary delay did take place in the execution of this service; and, on the contrary, that it was *owing to the time chosen by me for sending a force in to make the attack, that the service was accomplished with so very inconsiderable a loss.*

Had I pursued any of the means deemed practicable by Lord Cochrane, I am firmly persuaded the success attending this achievement would have proved *more dearly bought* than any yet recorded in our naval annals, and far from accomplishing the hopes of my country, or the expectations of the Admiralty, must have disappointed both. If such, too, were the foundation of his Lordship's prospects,† it is just they should vanish before the superior considerations attendant on a service involving the naval character and most important interests of the nation.

I conclude by observing that the service actually performed has been of great importance, as well in its immediate effects, as in its ultimate consequences, for the Brest fleet is so reduced as to be no longer effective. It was upon this fleet the enemy relied for the succour

* Proved by the evidence.

† . . . personal considerations were enough; the expectations of my country—the hopes of the Admiralty—*and my own prospects were about to vanish.*—Evidence of Lord Cochrane. Minutes, p. 48.

and protection of their West Indian colonies, and the destruction of their ships was effected in their own harbour, in sight of thousands of the French; and I congratulate myself and my country that this important service has been effected, under Providence, with the loss only of ten men killed, thirty-five wounded, and one missing, and not even one of the smallest of our vessels employed has been disabled from proceeding on any service that might have become necessary. The extent of difficulties, and prospect of danger in this enterprise, were *extreme*, and the gallantry and determined spirit of those engaged most conspicuous. *These merits and those difficulties ought not to be depreciated, on account of the inconsiderable loss sustained on the occasion.* I by no means seek to arrogate to myself any merit by these observations, but I make them as a tribute of praise due to the zealous services of the brave officers and men under my command, and with a view of pointing out, how justly they are entitled to the gratitude of their country.

GAMBIER.

CHAPTER XIII.

SENTENCE OF THE COURT-MARTIAL.

The Judge-Advocate read the Sentence of the Court as follows:

At a Court-Martial, assembled on board His Majesty's ship 'Gladiator,' in Portsmouth Harbour, on the 26th day of July, 1809, and continued, by adjournment, from day to day (Sunday excepted), until the 4th of August, 1809.

Pursuant to an order from the Right Honourable Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, dated the 5th day of June last, and directed to the President, setting forth, that Admiral the Right Honourable Lord Gambier had, by his letter to their Lordships' secretary, on the 30th of May, 1809, requested that his conduct, as Commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet, employed in Basque Roads, between the 17th day of March and the 29th day of April, 1809, might be enquired into by a Court-Martial; and that by the log-books, and minutes of signals of the 'Caledonia,' 'Impérieuse,' and other ships employed in that service, it

appeared to them that the said Admiral Lord Gambier, on the 12th day of the said month of April, the enemy's ships being then on shore, and the signal having been made that they could be destroyed, did, for a considerable time, neglect or delay taking effectual measures for destroying them; and they, therefore, in compliance with his Lordship's request, and in consequence of what appeared in the said log-books and minutes of signals, thought fit that a Court-Martial should be assembled for the purpose of examining into his Lordship's conduct, and trying him for the same—the Court proceeded to try the said Admiral Lord Gambier for his conduct in the instance herein before mentioned; and also to enquire into his whole conduct and proceedings as Commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet employed in Basque Roads, between the said 17th day of March and the 29th day of April, 1809, and to try him for the same accordingly: And having heard the evidence produced in support of the charge, and by the said Right Honourable Lord Gambier, in his Defence, and what his Lordship had to allege in support thereof, and having maturely and deliberately weighed and considered the whole, the Court is of opinion that the charge, "That the said Admiral the Right Honourable Lord Gambier, on the 12th day of the said month of April, the enemy's ships being then on shore, and the signal having been made, that they could be destroyed, did, for a considerable time, neglect or delay taking effectual measures for destroying them," has not been proved against the said Admiral the Right Honourable Lord Gambier; but that his Lordship's conduct on that occasion, as well as his general conduct and proceedings as Commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet employed in Basque Roads, between the 17th day of

March and the 29th day of April, 1809, was marked by ZEAL, JUDGMENT, ABILITY, and AN ANXIOUS ATTENTION TO THE WELFARE OF HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE; and doth adjudge him to be MOST HONOURABLY ACQUITTED; and the said Admiral the Right Honourable Lord Gambier, is hereby MOST HONOURABLY ACQUITTED accordingly.

(Signed) ROGER CURTIS.
W. YOUNG.
J. J. DUCKWORTH.
H. E. STANHOPE.
B. DOUGLAS.
G. CAMPBELL.
JOHN SUTTON.
JOHN IRWIN.
ROBERT HALL.
E. S. DICKSON.
R. D. DUNN.

M. GREETHAM, JUN., Deputy Judge-Advocate of the Fleet.

President.—Hand me up my Lord Gambier's sword.

It was handed to the President.

President.—Admiral Lord Gambier, I have peculiar pleasure in receiving the command of the Court to return you your sword, in the fullest conviction that (as you have hitherto done) you will, on all future occasions, use it for the honour and advantage of your country, and to your own personal honour. Having so far obeyed the command of the Court, I beg you will permit me, in my individual capacity, to express to you the high gratification I have upon this occasion.

Lord Gambier.—I cannot sufficiently express the sense I feel of the patient attention of the Court, and beg to return thanks to you, Sir, for the obliging manner in which you have conveyed to me their sentiments.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thus ended this memorable Court-Martial, wherein we find a British officer tried, for having, with a loss almost nominal, broken up a very important hostile fleet in one of its own harbours, previously deemed impregnable.

From the evidence transcribed, whose verification is in every one's power, the reader has the means of judging impartially whether the decision of the Court was in accordance with that evidence. Briefly the facts run thus:

A Court-Martial assembles to decide whether the slur thrown by Lord Cochrane non-professionally on Lord Gambier's professional reputation is, or is not merited. Lord Cochrane, having been professionally an eye-witness to the proceedings whose management he had non-professionally censured, is, with other eye-witnesses, summoned to give professional evidence thereupon. He deposes to the effect—that, early on the morning of the 12th of April, the enemy's fleet was in a position to be easily de-

stroyed by a portion of the British fleet—that the 'Impérieuse' (being one of the advanced frigates) so signalled after daylight and successively—that Lord Gambier was to blame for not acting in conformity with that signal, and, *a fortiori*, for not sending in ships till after two P.M. The remaining witnesses are twenty-seven, which, subtracting those who only verified something affirmed during the proceedings, leaves nineteen to support or to contradict the position maintained by Lord Cochrane respecting the actual question at issue.

Not one supports it.

The nearest approach thereto is the deposition of Captain Broughton—that the ships might have gone in at eleven o'clock A.M. on the chance of silencing batteries whose strength he, the witness, had not ascertained.

To sum up the evidence for the reader would be an assumption equally far from my merits or my self-estimate. If anything could add weight to the overwhelming evidence on which the Court, under peril of perjury, acquitted the accused—the tone of his defence would, to an English reader, be that thing. A comparison of that defence with the abusive digressions of Lord Cochrane adds the weight of one's own experience in probabilities to the actual testimony given before the Court.

The main question throughout this inquiry has

been: "Could more have been done?" But at the end of it, the question arises: "What *was* done?"

The French fleet in Aix Roads consisted of ten line-of-battle ships, one fifty-six gun-ship ('Calcutta') full of stores for the West Indies, and four frigates. Of these—three line-of-battle ships, the 'Calcutta' and a frigate were totally destroyed—three more line-of-battle ships were so damaged as to be unfit for sea—and three more variously damaged, with the loss of the greater part of their guns and stores. Only one ship of the line and three frigates escaped, by getting far up the Charente on the night of the 11th. Thus, one third of the fleet was totally destroyed, and another third *hors de combat*—half of which permanently. So that, out of a fleet of fifteen ships, on which the Emperor relied for preserving his own colonies of the West Indies, and harassing or taking ours, there remained for use only one ship of the line and three frigates with disheartened crews.

The *immediate* result of this was that Martinique was soon after taken, almost without loss on our side. Its *permanent* effect is felt to this day; for never more had Napoleon the means of striking the blow at our West Indian Colonies that he could and would have done, had not the fleet told off for that purpose been destroyed in Aix Roads. The judgment shown by Lord Gambier in choosing the

right moment for attack, caused the above-named effects to be produced with a loss of only ten men killed, and without loss or even delay from service of one British vessel. The inadequacy of the supply to the demand for ships of war, at that time, circumstantially enhances the practical value of this service. To the Admiralty the advantage gained was beyond computation—their bugbear being dispelled by means which left the Channel fleet at their immediate disposal for any or different services. A private letter from the Admiralty, written a month before, dilating upon the poverty of this country in ships of the line, foreshadows, in a manner more convincing than dignified, the gratitude which that Board ought to have felt towards Lord Gambier in the event.

But whatever may have been their private sentiments of gratitude, they were frightened out of its public expression by the non-professional threats of a junior captain, backed, after the custom of that period, by the loud cries of an opposing political party.

The partiality which Lord Dundonald attributes to the Board in this matter, strongly reminds one of the old lines:

> "Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love:
> But why did you kick me down stairs?"

—their Lordships having manifested their partiality by so wording the charge that the Court was therein almost told to find the accused guilty:

"Whereas by the log-books &c. &c. &c., it appears to us that the said Admiral &c. &c. did for a considerable time neglect or delay," &c. &c. Vide Admiralty order to Sir Roger Curtis, President of the Court-Martial.

Briefly—for a service which, with a loss almost nominal, put *hors de combat* more than half of the hostile ships—temporarily disabled three more, and demoralized the crews of all—which at once left the Channel fleet unhurt at the disposal of the Admiralty for any service or services—which entailed the bloodless capture of an island in the West Indies, and saved the British possessions there from attack at a period when we were least able to defend them—for this Lord Gambier was condemned on assumption without proof, forced thereby into a long and very expensive trial, at which, standing as a prisoner before a Court chiefly composed of his juniors in naval rank, he had to defend his honour and that of his fleet against the accusation of a captain whom he had treated with the extreme of kindness and confidence. And when the crushing weight of evidence forced that Court to acquit him, or perjure themselves, when—after an investigation long, minute and vexatious, that Court pronounced that his conduct had been marked by zeal, judgment and ability—what was done, in acknowledgment of the service performed, and of the calumny to which the Board of Admiralty had affixed their signature? A tardy and general mo-

tion of the thanks of Parliament, which, having been only suspended during the inquiry, could no longer be withheld—and an offer of the same decoration which, three months before, they had conferred on Lord Cochrane, a junior captain of the Basques Roads squadron.

This offer Lord Gambier very properly declined.

CHAPTER XV.

The foul blow previously struck at Lord Gambier, in the shape of a private accusation to a Minister, by an officer, whom the accused had confidentially accredited to that Minister—the forbearance shewn by Lord Gambier, when, on the Court-Martial to which he was thereby driven, he had his reputation assailed by Lord Cochrane in abusive digressions—the sentence resulting from a minute and comparative examination of the evidence given before a public Court, by the most competent witnesses on oath—all this would seem to have exhausted the subject, and given to Lord Gambier's reputation, as regarded Basques Roads, a receipt in full of all demands. Not so. A few days after the subsequent Meeting of Parliament, Lord Cochrane took the opportunity of having the last word, by moving for the production of the Minutes, or, in other words, for the irresponsible discussion of a trial which had been minutely reported and published—offering to prove incorrect a chart which was verified on oath by eye-witnesses

of high character and professional reputation. His colleague, Sir Francis Burdett, seconded the motion.

In a few words, Mr. Wilberforce gave the question its proper bearings; and if it be objected that Lord Gambier was his personal friend, it must be remembered that so also was Lord Melville, for whose impeachment he voted in 1806. It is unnecessary to conclude the sentence.

Mr. Wilberforce thought "the motion of Lord Cochrane particularly important, as it threw a gross stigma on the whole of the members of the Court-Martial. All the evidence, however, was one way. If the sentence had been conceived in dry or doubtful terms, then the House might have called for the Minutes. That was not the case; and all that remained for the House to suppose, was that the noble Lord thought differently at the time of the Court-Martial, and that he did so still."

Captain Beresford* reminded Lord Cochrane how he had "formed his charts and log-books."†

Lord Cochrane's motion was negatived by one hundred and seventy-one to nineteen.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the Vote of Thanks. Mr. Windham declaimed against "undeserving ambition—still panting—still insatiable;" words which, as regarding a man notoriously devoid of ambition, show how free from personality are the speeches of Opposition members. The

* Who commanded the 'Theseus' in Basque Roads. † Vide Minutes.

more so when it is remembered, that three days after this, the Vote of thanks for TALAVERA was opposed —the Duke of Wellington being accused by Mr. Windham of having "proclaimed glory that did not belong to him," and by Lord Milton of having "fought merely for a peerage;" the latter proposing as an amendment, that the thanks of the House be given to the officers and troops *serving under* Lord Wellington.

In the House of Lords, a Vote of Thanks to Lord Gambier was carried without a division. The Earl of Buckinghamshire said that he thought the "service performed by Lord Gambier in Basque Roads important; and was persuaded that the public thought more highly of that noble Lord since the Court-Martial than before it. He, for his part, would give thanks to Lord Gambier, not only for having destroyed the enemy's ships, but also for having withstood that advice which was calculated to hurry him into a course of conduct the consequence of which must have been great loss to the fleet which he commanded."

The thanks of the House of Lords were given to Lord Gambier, Rear-Admiral Stopford, and the officers and seamen under their command as follows: those of the House of Commons in the same words.

Die Jovis, 8th February, 1810.

Resolved, Nemine Dissentiente by the Lords

Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, that the Thanks of this House be given to Admiral Lord Gambier for the zeal, judgment, ability, and anxious attention to the welfare of His Majesty's service, which marked his Lordship's conduct as Commander-in-chief of the Fleet in Basques Roads, by which the French Fleet, which had taken refuge under the protection of its own batteries, were driven on shore and disabled, and a considerable part of them destroyed on the 11th and 12th of April, 1809.

GEORGE ROSE, Clerk Parliament.

The above Document was accompanied by the following note from Lord Eldon, the Lord Chancellor,

My Lord,

I have the honour to enclose to your Lordship a Resolution of the Lords in Parliament assembled, which I assure your Lordship I have the highest personal satisfaction in communicating. With a like satisfaction, my Lord, I shall discharge the duty which the House has commanded me to execute, whenever I have the honour of seeing you in your place. In obedience to the commands of the House, I accompany this with other (the enclosed) resolutions; and I am, with the highest respect, your Lordship's obedient servant,

ELDON C.

CHAPTER XVI.

The following extracts are from the papers of a French officer, embarked on board the 'Océan,' Admiral Allemand's flag-ship.

Extracts from the intercepted letters of a French officer to his sister.

Isle d'Aix, March, 1809.

* * We are constantly on the "qui vive," though we do not think the enemy means to attack us, as our anchorage is so well protected. Our advanced frigates now and then exchange some shots with those of the English.... Admiral Willaumez, who commanded the fleet on our leaving Brest, has lately been disgraced, and is no longer in command. This circumstance is attributed to the fault that he committed, in allowing the two English squadrons that now blockade us, to join, instead of having engaged them separately, which would have done the English considerable injury, and would have left us at liberty to pursue our route to Martinique, which place is, it is said, on the point of being attacked by a numerous force, and, perhaps, will fall into the hands of the enemy—whereas, we should not only have *afforded succour to that island,* but

should have given an *important blow to the English colonies*, before they could have brought any forces, near as numerous as ours, to oppose us.

Extracts from the intercepted letters of a French officer to Monsieur L. Heritier.

March 26th, 1809.

We have lost our admiral (Admiral Willaumez). He (Monsieur Bergeret) sent to the Minister of Marine a lying report... He accused Admiral Willaumez of having remained forty-eight hours near Groix, instead of making sail for Rochefort immediately, and thus not afford the enemy time to establish the blockade of this roadstead. It is not true that we remained forty-eight hours off Groix. * * It appears that the Minister paid little attention to this report, as he sent it to Admiral Willaumez, who immediately sent for M. Bergeret, without telling him that the Minister had forwarded his report, but complaining that he had written to His Excellency against him. M. Bergeret first denied this, swearing, on his honour, that he had not made any report to the Admiral's prejudice; but when Admiral Willaumez produced the letter to him, M. Bergeret was thunderstruck, and finding himself ill at his ease where he was, returned to his own ship. At length he has just been summoned to Paris, and, without doubt, will be confronted with the Admiral in the presence of the Minister.

We are closely blockaded. The enemy's boats now guard night and day at the entrance of the roadstead, and even in it. Three days ago, some boats took three chasse-marées, notwithstanding the fire of the forts, under which

they had taken shelter. We, however, make every necessary arrangement to avoid these losses. We have boats, but their sailing is very inferior to those of the enemy... We were anchored in three lines in the entrance of the Pass, and too far out.... We are now anchored in two parallel lines. The front of the fleet is covered with the batteries of the Isle d'Aix, and the rear by banks of mud; so if the enemy should attempt to attack by main strength, he could only assail our van. We have three frigates to protect the entrance of the Pass, and always kept ready to weigh.

April 10th, 1809.

We are in continual apprehension lest the enemy should attack the Isle d'Aix. It is strong only on that part which protects the fleet.... We wish that the English would make their attack on our fleet alone; our position, such as I described it to you in my last letter, puts us in a condition as to give them a warm reception... We have also made a boom, and placed it without our advanced frigates. It is composed of strong cables of the smaller kind, and is floated by large logs of wood, and other materials; it is held by strong anchors, and covers all the part whence the current comes towards our fleet. At night, boats are armed, and moored within this boom, to protect it from the attacks of the English boats, and captains of line-of-battle ships and frigates go their rounds without it, to observe the movements of the enemy.

Notwithstanding all these precautions, they make us suffer some loss every day. Within these twenty days, they have taken from under the forts of Rochelle, and Isle

d'Aix, a dozen of merchant vessels. As soon as they perceive them, their armed boats are after them, and their activity, and that of their frigates, which are under sail to protect them, leaves us no alternative but to be the unwilling spectators of these losses.

The other day, an English frigate came to the approach of the roadstead, near the Boyart, on which a strong battery is proposed to be erected, and notwithstanding the fire of our advanced frigate, and that of the forts, which threw a great number of shells, she sent a boat to the foundation of the fort, which overthrew all the materials placed for working it, and carried away the tools of the workmen, &c.

* * * *

April 11th, 1809.

Respecting the fire-ships, the French officer writes:

At the same time, with the explosion of three catamarans, the van of our fleet was covered with vessels on fire, which, making to the eastward, bore down under all sail towards the entire of our squadron. * * The 'Regulus' cut her cable, to get clear of the vessel that threatened to burn her. This movement of the 'Regulus' caused us to cut our cable; but as soon as we were brought up by our anchor, three fire-vessels were making towards us. What was to be done? We were obliged to cut this cable also, and steer so as to avoid the Palles shoal, on which the 'Jean Bart' was lost. At ten we grounded, and immediately after, a fire-ship, in the height of her combustion, grappled us athwart our stern. For the ten minutes that she remained in this situation, we employed every means in our

power to prevent the fire from catching our ship. We played our fire-engines, and wetted the poop enough to prevent its catching fire; with spars we bore off the fire-ship; with axes we cut the chains of the grapnels lashed to the ends and the middle of the yards; but chevaux-de-frise on her side held her firmly to us. In this deplorable situation we thought we must have been burnt, as the flame from the fire-vessel covered all our poop.

Two of our line-of-battle ships, 'Tonnerre' and 'Patriot,' at this time fell on board of us.... Providence afforded us assistance.... At the moment when the fire-ship began to drive forward along our starboard side, the 'Tonnerre' disengaged herself from us. Had this not happened, the fire-vessel would have fallen into the angle formed by the two ships, and would inevitably have burnt them. The fire-vessel, having got as far forward as to be under our bowsprit, we held it there some time, to afford the two ships above mentioned time to get away, to avoid being boarded by this fire-vessel.

We lost at least fifty men by their generous devotion... Some time after, another vessel on fire was making towards our starboard quarter; we fired a broadside, and sent away her mainmast, which occasioned her veering, and she passed by us close alongside. All the rest of the night, we were surrounded by vessels on fire; our guns were constantly firing even on the English boats which towed a part of their fire-ships. The one that grappled us on the stern was towed by a boat manned by sixteen or twenty men; we fired on her, and obliged her to let go the tow.*

* The reader will remember that the men here described as tow-

On this fatal night, the 'Cassard' had five men killed, and fifteen mortally wounded, by shot from one of the fire-ships. These fire-ships had all their sails set, even the royals; all their guns on board well loaded. They threw out fire-rockets, &c., &c.

April 12th.

Many men of these ships ('Aquilon,' 'Ville de Varsovie,' and 'Calcutta') were drowned. The 'Tonnerre,' which was run on shore, and on a hard bottom, made a good deal of water, and was left at five o'clock. M. Clément de la Roncière set fire to her, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. This day of the 12th was a very disastrous one; four of our ships were destroyed, and many brave people lost their lives.

April 13th.

Began at daylight emptying our third tier of water, &c., our ballast, casks of flour, and some salt provisions, &c.

April 14th.

We lightened the ship by starting the second tier of water, throwing overboard the gunner's and carpenter's heavy stores, and also a great quantity of round and grape shot.

April 15th.

As soon as the ship ('Océan') began to feel the flood-tide, we hove a great strain on the cables—at *low water, the ship was quite dry.* We threw overboard all the upper-deck guns, and half the main-deck guns, and four 24-pounders. We set all our headsails, and cut the

ing blazing fire-ships under the guns of the enemy's ships, are by Lord Dundonald accused—directly of neglect of duty—and by implication of something worse.

cable, and the 'Océan' went ahead through the mud, and at last got into the fair way of the river, touching the whole of the way.

On the 8th of April, anchors, cables, and other materials necessary to make a second boom were applied for, and it is clear it would have been of the greatest service, to guard us from the enemy's fire-ships. The coast is covered with the remains of the fire-ships, and our ships that were burnt.

The greatest part of our ships threw their guns overboard.

I subjoin three corroborative letters to English officers present in Aix Roads.

Extract* of a letter from an officer of His Majesty's ship 'Revenge,' of 74 guns, dated Rochefort, the 13th April, 1809.

I informed you in my last letter, that the Honourable Captain Pagett had obtained a temporary leave of absence, and our ship was commanded by Captain Alexander Robert Kerr.

I will now endeavour to send you a few particulars of our attack on the enemy's fleet in Aix Roads. For two hours and a half we encountered yesterday a dreadful fire from the batteries and some of the enemy's ships; we were the first ship at the time in, and, thank God, considering our situation, we were very fortunate, only three killed and fifteen wounded; our men behaved nobly, and knocked an 84 gun ship almost to atoms; we understand she had

* From the Naval Chronicle, vol. xxi., p. 399.

sixty killed, and as she was lying aground she was burnt; last night the sight was glorious; four line-of-battle ships in flames, and their blowing up was awfully tremendous. We had just water enough for the 'Revenge' to get without the range of the shot, where we lay at anchor all night, and this morning we were the last line-of-battle ship that came out. We had a 42-pound shot in the bowsprit, which has cut it up very much; some of our men were badly wounded; one shot knocked down nine men on the quarter-deck, two were killed, and seven wounded; one of our lieutenants was wounded by the head of a man that was taken off as clean as if by a knife, and struck him instantly on the breast.

Lord Cochrane behaved most gallantly; he is now in a bomb, firing away at a three-decker that is on shore, which I hope he will be able to destroy; all this has been done in one of our enemy's harbours, that has hitherto been considered as totally impracticable for any of our ships to enter.

From the Naval Chronicle, Vol. XXI., p. 395.

Mr. Editor,

On my return from Basque Roads, I was not a little surprised to find the public appeared to be somewhat divided in their estimation of the importance of our successful enterprize; and that an impression, extremely prejudicial to the general satisfaction which ought to have been excited by the achievement, seems to have prevailed, from a mistaken notion which has been spread, that there existed a want of cordiality between the Commander-in-chief and Lord Cochrane, a notion which every one knows

to be unfounded, either in fact, in cause, or in effect. Through the channel of your publication, therefore, the spirit and object of which I am convinced are independence and impartiality, I cannot refrain from offering to the public these communications, which arose from personal observation, as to the importance of the service performed, and the success of the measures adopted for the destruction of the enemy.

As to the importance of the exploit, I cannot but consider it as even greater than that of a more extensive victory at sea in the present moment, because victory in such a case is almost a certainty.

The destruction, however, of the ships in Basque Roads, in one of the enemy's *strongest and best ports*, is a victory of a new class; it proves that he is nowhere safe, and points out a mode of warfare which defies the utmost caution he can adopt. But there is another point of view not to be forgotten in this estimation, that Buonaparte cannot conceal the extent of the misfortune—and the bravery of the British navy, from his subjects.

It was done in presence of a large army, prepared to embark in the devoted squadron, and before thousands of the French people, who there beheld an English frigate leading in to the attack of their line-of-battle ships, and fearless at their batteries. Surely, Sir, when these points are considered, it gives a claim of the utmost importance to this service even where the Gazette leaves it. But there is no doubt, from subsequent information, that the discomfiture, if I may not use the term destruction, is nearly total. There are not above one or two of these ships that can ever probably go to sea again, and these not without a thorough repair; yet were they not in this ruined condition

they have been driven into a corner where they may be blocked up for ever, nor do I therefore hesitate to say that not *one* ship of this fleet will *ever go to sea again*, and I know not how a victory can be well more important or complete.

With regard to the remaining points, a short account of the transactions of the 11th and 12th at once proves the cordiality of the commanders, and the sufficiency of the means adopted.

On the night of the 11th (April, 1809) Lord Cochrane's plan was carried into effect, under his own immediate direction in every respect, as far as the state of the weather would permit; and although none of the enemy's ships were actually destroyed that night by the fire-ships in the manner projected, still that attack drove them from their strong position, and led to all the successes which followed. Placed as the enemy were in line of battle, in a narrow channel, and flanked by the batteries of the Isle d'Aix, our fleet could have attempted nothing; the channel would not hold both fleets, and any attack in such a position must have been certain of failure, if not worse; but when by the tornado of fire with which they were assailed, the enemy's fleet had been driven with confusion and dismay from their anchorage; when, to avoid immediate conflagration, they were obliged to open the channel to the ruin that was to follow; nay, even to risk the chance of immediate shipwreck, for a temporary escape from a great peril; from that moment ultimate success became certain—from that moment it was evident that the ruin of the enemy's fleet must ensue.

At day-break, most of their ships were ashore, but it was not ebb-tide; it required at least half-flood before it would be expedient for the large ships to get

under weigh; every ship, however, cleared for action, unmoored, and as soon as the tide served, the whole fleet took a closer position.

The Commander-in-chief's first plan was: that the 'Caledonia' and 'Cæsar' were to go in against, and attempt to silence, the batteries at the fort of Isle d'Aix, while the attack was made on the enemy's ships on shore by smaller vessels.

It was, however, the opinion of every officer and of the pilots, that there would not be water for those large ships, so that Lord Gambier was obliged to abandon this plan, and, I can take upon myself to say, with reluctance, for I witnessed his anxiety and mortification at that moment. About an hour after the fleet had taken their advanced station, the 'Impérieuse' got under weigh, and ran down towards the enemy's fleet in the most gallant style, and to the admiration of every one. Lord Cochrane now made a signal that the enemy might be attacked with advantage, and immediately the Commander-in-chief ordered in the 'Revenge' and 'Valiant' 74's; the 'Emerald,' 'Pallas,' and other frigates, with the sloops, brigs, &c., of the squadron. From the judicious position taken, and the well directed fire of the 'Impérieuse,' the 'Calcutta' struck. The 'Revenge' now shot ahead, and the rest of the force coming up, the four outermost ships of the enemy were burnt. The others, however, which had gone on shore the preceding night, at about half-flood, having now lightened, alternately grounding and floating under a press of sail, were by this time able to get further up; and the 'Revenge,' and even the 'Impérieuse' herself, having, as the tide was now ebbing, felt the ground, it was necessary for

all to draw out into deeper water. What follows, it is needless to expatiate on: enough has been said to prove that there existed no jealousy, no want of co-operation, and that the means employed were equal to the occasion; for even the ships that went in could not all of them be brought into action, and the frigates themselves grounded. It has been asked, Why was the fleet moored on the morning of the 12th? Because, having unmoored the preceding afternoon, it blew too hard for them to continue to lie at anchor, they were therefore obliged to moor again in the evening, and the weather was extremely unsettled all night. It has also been a question why were they not unmoored at an earlier hour? Because, if they had been so, they could not have gone in before the flood-tide had made.

These, Sir, are plain and unsophisticated answers, as I trust every part of the above statement will appear. For myself, be assured, I have no interested or party feelings on the subject; but as an honest man, and a true Englishman, I grieve to find a great public benefit undervalued, from an unfounded belief that more might have been done. It is easy to fight a battle over a second time, and difficult in that case not to find some point that might have been improved upon; but, perhaps, few actions have happened in which there appears less to mend under the existing circumstances of weather, and the extraordinary rapidity of execution required; and I am convinced that neither Lord Cochrane, nor any true friend of his, will contradict this assertion.

But I trust the thanks of the country will soon convince the public, that whatever injudicious opinion may have gone forth, it is totally unfounded. It behoves us

to nourish our best hopes in times like the present, where there are but too many amongst us whose object is to detract from all our successes, whoever the Minister may be, or whoever the Commander.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

An Eye-Witness.

From the Naval Chronicle, Vol. XXI. p. 402.

Destruction of the French fleet in Basque Roads, with a plan* of the harbour, &c., by an Officer of His Majesty's ship, 'Valiant.'

Mr. Editor,

As a public despatch is not calculated to include many of the minute particulars relating to a naval operation, but merely to pencil out a broad outline, and sum up a final result, I beg leave to fill a few of the chasms with such particulars as fell under my immediate observation, during the late attack on the French fleet in the Basque and Aix Roads.

On the 11th of April, 1809, the French fleet were anchored in two lines between Isle d'Aix and a shoal to the southward of that island; the channel was narrow, and between them and the outer roads was placed a kind of boom composed of cables, secured by anchors and floated by buoys, and which they believed capable of resisting fire-ships; while the batteries of Isle d'Aix on one side, and Oléron on the other, secured them from open attack by ships of war. I learned, however,

* The plan accompanying this letter, being similar to other maps of Aix Roads, has been omitted.

afterwards, from a French officer, that they had a number of boats out every night, ready to tow off any fire-ships, in case we succeeded in breaking the boom. As the wind was strong from the northward all the afternooon of the 11th of April, they judged the precaution of boats unnecessary, not expecting that we should attempt anything that night.

Our officers, however, having assembled on board the 'Caledonia' for orders, repaired to their respective fire-ships, and in the morning dropped down to the place (*i.e.* in a direct line towards the enemy, and in the direct course of the wind as bearing upon the enemy's fleet), where they lay at anchor till about nine o'clock. They then got under weigh, and in an hour afterwards there were eighteen or twenty vessels in a blaze. From the ships in Basque Roads they appeared to form a chain of ignited pyramids, stretching from the Isle d'Aix to the Boyart shoal; while Congreve's rockets flying through the air in various directions, and, like comets, dragging a fiery train behind, formed a scene at once the most grand and terrific that can be imagined. The 'Mediator' was the first to strike the boom, and providentially, from the strength of the wind and tide, she broke the Gallic barrier, and thus destroyed the palladium of their hopes.

A brisk cannonade now commenced from the batteries on the Isle d'Aix, and likewise from several of the French ships, whose vivid flashes, glancing like electric fires through volumes of smoke and flame emitted by the fire-ships, heightened the sublimity of the scene; every breast now heaved with the strongest emotions of anxiety for the fate of our brother officers and gallant seamen

employed in this most dangerous enterprise; nor were these emotions unaccompanied by a frequent sigh of regret for the desperate situation of our enemies; and many of us anathematized the tyrant whose insatiable ambition drove a generous and brave enemy to the necessity of using these cruel implements of destruction in defence of their hearths and altars. At this moment, the channel being opened by the successful impulse of the 'Mediator,' a train of at least a dozen fire-ships drifted directly towards the French fleet, which in the utmost consternation cut their cables and ran aground on the shoal marked (Les Palles) in the chart; two fire-ships actually fell foul of two French men-of-war, but by great exertions they (the French) disengaged themselves, and suffered the rest to drive peaceably up towards the Charente.

On board the English fleet we were of course in the greatest suspense, both with respect to our companions, and the success of the enterprise; indeed of the latter we began to form no sanguine hopes, seeing that no explosion took place, and that many of the fire-ships, from a wrong direction, had fallen upon shoals and sands, where they burned without annoying the enemy. Before daylight, most of our officers returned, and as the dawn advanced, we beheld the greater part of the French fleet driven from their anchorage, and fast aground on the above-mentioned shoal; many of them nearly on their broadsides, and in a most melancholy condition. A telegraphic communication having taken place between Lord Gambier and Lord Cochrane, the English fleet got under weigh (12th April) and dropped down nearer to the enemy, *i.e.*, three miles from Isle d'Aix it having been

it having been intended that the 'Caledonia' and 'Cæsar' should engage the batteries; but too little water having been found for this operation, the 'Valiant' and 'Revenge' ships of the line, were ordered to anchor off the Boyart shoal, within range of shells, in company with the 'Etna,' bomb, and several frigates.

At this time the enemy were making every exertion to heave their ships off the shoal, which many of them effected, and stood up towards the entrance of the Charente; four, however, of their ships, namely, the 'Varsovie,' 'Aquilon,' 'Tonnerre' and 'Calcutta,' seemed completely fixed; at one o'clock, therefore, Lord Cochrane, in the 'Impérieuse,' weighed anchor, and stood in between the Boyart and Isle d'Aix, close to the former. The batteries from Oléron now opened, and the shells pitched in every direction around the 'Impérieuse' and 'Etna,' while the 42-pounders from Isle d'Aix went over them in the contrary direction; regardless of these, they steadily pursued an equi-distant course between the two islands, and in twenty minutes they passed the Scylla and Charybdis without any loss; they now steered for the western edge of the shoal, and having proceeded to that part, they opened their fire on the French ships which were aground, the batteries on the fortified point of Isle d'Aix at the same time opening a tremendous cannonade on them in return.

The 'Valiant' and 'Revenge,' accompanied by the 'Indefatigable, 'Pallas,' 'Emerald,' 'Unicorn,' and 'Aigle' frigates, at half-past two o'clock weighed anchor, and took the same route which the 'Impérieuse' and 'Etna' had done before, the shot and shells passing over them without producing any effect; these ships, having

come to an anchor off the edge of the shoal, opened a well directed fire on the French ships (under a heavy discharge from Isle d'Aix), particularly on the 'Ville de Varsovie' and 'Aquilon,' while the 'Calcutta,' in all probability, struck to the 'Impérieuse,' whose judicious position and inimitable fire exceed all praise.

The French ships, after firing for some time from their sterns, &c., struck their colours, many of the crew betaking themselves to their boats, while the 'Tonnerre,' either by accident or design, caught fire, and in half an hour blew up, with a most awful and magnificent explosion; previously to this, however, the 'Calcutta' was in flames, but did not explode till past seven o'clock, when she blew up, and exhibited the most sublime spectacle the human mind could contemplate, or the eye survey, without emotions of terror. . . . .

. . . . After securing five or six hundred of the prisoners, the 'Aquilon' and 'Varsovie' were doomed to the flames; and as the night advanced, the inhabitants of Rochefort, Rochelle, Isle of Rhé, Isle of Oléron, and Isle d'Aix, &c., &c., beheld one of their chief harbours mournfully but splendidly illuminated by the destruction of their shattered navy. That anchorage, which twenty-four hours before, contained eleven sail of the line and four frigates, defended from open violence by numerous batteries, and from fire-ships by a supposed impassable boom, was now occupied by a victorious enemy; while the refluent tides carried up to the walls of their proudest cities, the melancholy emblems of their own defeat, and the memorable trophies of British bravery. Almost all of these ships which escaped destruction by fire, were aground in various directions between Isle d'Aix and Isle Madame;

two or three days after the action, a frigate was burnt near Ennette Isle, and others must have experienced, many of them irreparable, and all, considerable damage, as we could see them heaving overboard their ammunition and stores, in order to prevent their going to pieces on the shoals. No further operations, however, were deemed practicable, on account of the intricacy of the channel, and the numerous protecting batteries which now surrounded the French ships in every direction.

The 'Valiant' was aground five hours, and the 'Cæsar' which came down late in the afternoon, was likewise on shore; but fortunately they got off early on the morning of the 13th of April, without any material injury, leaving a squadron of frigates out of gun-shot, to the westward of the shoals, where they lay in despite of the enemy; though, in passing to and from our fleet, they were exposed to a cannonade from both sides.

I shall now conclude with a few observations on the series of events which took place here, on the 11th and 12th of April, with their immediate and probable consequences.

There cannot be a doubt but that the fire-vessels, with the additional terrors given them by the application of Congreve's rockets, although they did not directly destroy the French ships, were the first cause of their destruction, for had the enemy not been thus driven from their anchors, there is scarcely a possibility of their having been attacked by a sufficient number of our ships, on account of the want of water and narrowness of the channel. It is likewise a pleasing reflection to the humane mind, that the object sought after was thus gained, in a circuitous manner, which prevented the effusion of blood on both

sides. The Ruler of France has been deprived of a strong weapon, while the subject has been spared.

I would here fain pay a tribute of admiration to the zeal and co-operation of the fleet, and to the gallantry of Lord Cochrane, whose valour, judgment, and modesty (?) are equally deserving the highest encomiums, and received the most unreserved support from the Commander-in-chief. But his Lordship's own feelings will be his best reward. The last, though not least, subject I shall allude to, is, the consequences resulting from this enterprize. The mere destruction of fine ships is of but comparatively small concern, but the lesson we have taught our enemies, by forcing our way into one of their securest harbours, and destroying their fleet in the view of, perhaps, a million of spectators, will make an indelible impression even upon the ruler of France. This transaction cannot be vamped up and disguised in the public prints, as in the case when we conquer them at sea. Our superiority will be too glaring not to produce conviction; and, indeed, some of the officers, when they came on board as prisoners, exclaimed, "that they now had no security from the English in their harbours, and that they expected we should next go into Brest, and take out their fleet, whenever it suited our convenience!"

It is now probably in our power to destroy the harbour of Rochefort, by sinking hulks in the narrow channel near Isle d'Aix, and, at all events, the foundation of a battery which they are erecting on the Boyart shoal should be demolished, and small vessels left there to guard it in future. The Rochefort station needs no more to be regarded as a dangerous one in westerly gales, as ships of any draught of water may run in, and anchor betwen the Boyart shoal

and Isle d'Aix, in perfect security, during the heaviest tempest; and, in short, a small squadron there may keep in check double the number of the enemy, as, the moment they come to the only anchorage where they can take in their guns, they will be liable to the same salutation they experienced on the memorable 12th of April!

I. I.

From the Naval Chronicle, Vol. II., p. 252.

Extract from a letter of a correspondent, "giving a more correct and full account than has yet appeared" of the attack on the Isle d'Aix, in 1799 [ten years previous to that made by Lord Gambier].

At Sea, off the Isle of Oléron, July 25th, 1799.

On Monday evening, July 1st, Rear-Admiral Pole, in the 'Royal George,' with three bombs, their tenders, and several small cutters, joined the squadron under Admiral Berkeley, off the Isle of Rhé. An attack having been ordered by the Admiralty to be made on the Spanish squadron in Basque Roads, under the protection of the Isle d'Aix, Admiral Pole, on Tuesday morning, July 2nd, having sent the bombs, &c., ahead, under the orders of Captain Keats, of the 'Boadicea,' with the 'St. Fiorinzo' and 'Urania' frigates, bore up with his squadron, consisting of the 'Royal George,' 'Sanspareil,' 'Venerable,' 'Renown' and 'Robust,' for the Pertuis d'Antioche. The morning was thick and rainy, so that it was not till the squadron was abreast of the Tour de Chasseron, on the northern point of the Isle of Oléron, that the enemy discovered it. At eleven o'clock, the squadron came to

anchor in Basque Roads, in a line of battle, at which time, the weather cleared up, and showed us the enemy between four or five miles off, moored in a line ahead, extending from the Isle of Aix towards a shoal that runs nearly parallel to the Isle of Oléron, between which and the Island was stationed a floating mortar battery. The Spanish squadron consisted of the 'San Real Carlos,' 100 guns, the Admiral's ship, four two-deckers—one of which was of 80 guns—and a frigate, which was the nearest to the Isle of Aix, and the Admiral the farthest.

The bombs and frigates, proceeding under the orders of Captain Keats, were judiciously anchored by that able officer within reach of the shells from the floating battery; and shortly afterwards, by the assistance of springs on their cables, opened their fire on the Spanish Admiral, who, finding his shot fell short of our ships, veered away his cable, and increased his distance so much as to render all the efforts made, during three hours, to set him on fire with carcasses ineffectual. The wind about this time passing away, and the enemy having brought forward a great many gun-boats, the Admiral thought it expedient to recall our force; a distant fire was kept up by the gun-boats until six o'clock, a full hour longer than it was possible to do us any injury. In the evening, the squadron got under weigh, and stood out to sea, through the Pertuis d'Antioche, no damage having been done by the operations of the day, as it is believed, on either side.

No assertion, Mr. Editor, can remain on the feasibility of more being done; our force was sufficient to have reduced the Spanish squadron; but even in that event it would not have been practicable to have brought them away, or even all our own ships, without reducing the Isle of Aix,

which is as strong as the best engineer the French had in 1782 could make it.

The interior work or citadel, is elevated considerably, and has many guns mounted on the new manner, *en barbet*, by which these are worked without danger, as was shown off Corsica, where one gun, only, disabled two of our line-of-battle ships. Had this battery been in the same state as when Lord Howe attacked it, in 1757, no difficulty could have occurred. This the Admiralty seem to have been well aware of, as the Admiral, by his orders, was only permitted to anchor in Basque Roads. Fire-vessels might probably have been employed with success, had they been sent in.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. WILBERFORCE TO LORD GAMBIER.

East Bourne, Sunday, 2 o'clock, August 6th, 1809.

My dear friend,

Surely even on this day it cannot be improper for me to mix my congratulations with yours on the happy tidings which, on my return from Church, have just now reached me—congratulations animated with a grateful sense of the Goodness of Him who has established your righteous cause. The post would not allow me to enlarge, were I disposed to yield to the confused mass of remarks and feelings which are pressing for expression. But I return thanks for your having been enabled to preserve that dignified calmness throughout the long and vexatious trial of temper to which you were subjected, and to exhibit a true specimen of Christian heroism. Heroism of a far rarer and more difficult sort than that (with which, however, in your instance it is known to be associated) which alone your opponent

has displayed, the heroism of dauntless bravery in the hour of battle. I presume the trial will be published, and will thank you to let me know which is the authentic and correct account, that I may get it.

I need not say Mrs. Wilberforce cordially participates in my joy and so does little William also.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE

P.S. I see there's a letter from Bedford (with about twelve or fourteen sheets more besides), but I cannot look at it before the post goes out. Be so good as to return him my thanks, and say I'll write soon. How I wished myself with you—Farewell.

I suppose Lady Gambier will be at Portsmouth; if so, kindest remembrances and congratulations to her also, and to any other common friends. I think even our friend Lord Barham would relax a little from his ordinary stoicism—though I remember his provoking me extremely when on my pouring forth the warm feelings which the account of your conduct on the 1st of June had produced, he dryly answered—"Yes, I always knew James would do his duty."

But you and I know he is not wanting in feeling.

MR. MORTON PITT TO LORD GAMBIER.

13th August, 1809.

My dear Jim,

You say Lord Mulgrave received you kindly. I have no doubt he received you civilly; but this latter word is more appropriate than the word kindly. You have been extremely ill-treated, your reputation hazarded, your purse put to an enormous charge, as the only means of rescuing your character from ignominy; and an insult is then at last offered to you, in proposing you a red riband, placing you on that list after Lord Cochrane! If they could undo what they have foolishly done, and withdraw that riband from Lord Cochrane's unworthy shoulder, it might be deemed a decoration or an honour: but to accept it now would be assenting to a stigma being put upon you, for such it must be thought. The Order of the Bath is degraded for a time! Degraded, whoever may next accept it: but in your case, you would become a participator in the insult put on yourself, were you to accept it.

I trust, therefore, that nothing will induce you to take it; and if it is again pressed upon you, I would, without communication with any one of H. M.'s Ministers, ask an audience of the King—you have a right to such audience—and then lay your case before him. I think you would do well to see Lord

Camden, and talk plainly and openly to him, and the same with Perceval and the Duke of Portland. So much as to grievances, and what you ought *not* to accept of.

In the next place, I would observe on what you *have* received, and lastly as to what reward they *should* confer upon you. What have they done for you? They have given you an empty peerage. The only inducement you had not to decline it, was the vain hope you entertained till the moment almost of your arrival from Copenhagen, that the title would have been limited, in default of your own issue, on your brother and the heirs male of his body. That hope induced you to accept what has rather been detrimental to you than an advantage. It has necessarily tended to increase your expenses, without means being applied to enable you to support them; and your Copenhagen prize money (which is a professional advantage shared with the rest of the officers on that expedition, and for which you are in no wise beholden to Government) has not compensated to you for the increased expenses attached, in point of decency, to the peerage. You are therefore less rich than had you not received this mark of the King's favour. The violence of party depreciated the advantages of the Copenhagen captures; and the peerage has brought with it expenses which you could otherwise have avoided. Had that peerage

been limited to your brother and nephews, it might have been a compensation; but as it is, you are no gainer.

But Lord Mulgrave says that the further limitation of the peerage would be too great a favour to grant! I consider a further limitation of a peerage, and an advancement to a superior title, to be nearly equivalent favours. Has not Lord Mulgrave's family received an advancement in the peerage? I remember the late Lord Mulgrave an Irish Peer—and *what were the services for which his family got the British peerage!* What did the government do for Lord Cathcart in reward for the Copenhagen affair? From a Scotch Baron he was created a British Viscount.

Government have considered the Basques Road victory as deserving reward, for they have given a reward to Lord Cochrane: and do they now think —now, after the decision of the Court-Martial—that it would be a sufficient reward to the Commander-in-chief to give him this same identical reward, which, to the disgrace of the present Admiralty, has been conferred on a subordinate character? I think the country will do you justice, if you wait—even if the Admiralty should refuse it to you.

I must entreat you to shew this letter to Sam, and to let me know what he thinks, as well as what you think on the subject. With respect to myself —if you can make any use of me, I am ready. I

have no objection to make *cause commune* with you both on this occasion; and if Government think proper to use you ill, they must not expect to find me much their friend.

Yours most affectionately,
W. PITT.

P.S.—Putting your naval services out of the question—have you not some pretensions for the seven years loss of time you gave up at the Admiralty, the salary for which never could compensate to you for the additional expenses incurred by a residence in London, and which prevented you from sharing those professional advantages which you had a fair claim to, had you had commands abroad. And who had more claim than yourself to foreign lucrative commands? Is all this to be passed over in silence? How many instances have there not been, of late years, of giving further limitation of peerages to collaterals, without any naval or military claims! It is a shameful conduct.

ADMIRAL BOWEN* TO LORD GAMBIER.

Transport Office, 7th August, 1809.

My Lord,

I do most sincerely congratulate your Lordship on the very honorable acquittal your services so

* Admiral Bowen was Master of the Fleet under Lord Howe on the 1st of June, 1794; and was promoted to the rank of Captain R.N.

justly merited. It will be a lesson to restless and inexperienced young officers, not to hazard a mischievous opinion tending to weaken the respect and confidence due to able and tried officers—particularly to commanders-in-chief. And I may now venture to say (without being accused of flattery) that no officer ever outstripped the Captain of the 'Defence' in bravery and judgment, *who, by prompt obedience to the signal, was the first that passed through the enemy's line on the 1st of June of glorious memory.*

I have the honor to be, my Lord,
Your Lordship's faithful and obliged servant,
W. Bowen.

MR. SERLE TO LORD GAMBIER.

Transport Office, 5th August, 1809.

My dear Lord,

I cannot easily express the pleasure I felt in reading the Sentence this morning, containing your Lordship's most honorable acquittal from one of the most base and ungrateful charges which perhaps has ever stood upon record in our naval history. All the sea-officers whom I have seen foretold the event, both from your Lordship's character, and that of your opponent, as well as from the circumstances of the case as they tran-

spired to knowledge, both by the evidence of those upon the spot, and of those who are acquainted with it.

I had written so far before I received your Lordship's obliging note, for which I thank you; and I am most heartily glad that so much malevolence, vanity, and (as I am told) ignorance of the profession have been so publicly and incontrovertibly disappointed.

Not a little censure likewise attaches to those who could employ such a man, over the heads of so great a number of brave and experienced officers as served under your command. Upon the whole, I am glad of this public investigation (though I am sensible it must have occasioned trouble and uneasiness to you, as to any other good and honorable man)—because it places your Lordship in a situation which must give you an additional claim to public confidence and esteem. No acquittal could be more complete—no conduct more unexceptionable. I rejoice, too, because the enemies of religion may now see that religion does not disqualify a man from serving his country in a manner the most faithful, dignified, and effectual.

Presuming that this letter may possibly find your Lordship at Iver, I venture to address it thither, and, with my humble respects to Lady Gambier, I will now only add that I have

the honour to be, with the most cordial attachment.

My dear Lord,
Your Lordship's
Most obliged and faithful friend and servant,
AMBROSE SERLE.

ADMIRAL SIR ANDREW HAMOND, COMPTROLLER OF THE NAVY, TO LORD GAMBIER.

Fitzroy Square, 7th August, 1809.

My dear Lord,

To say that I congratulate your Lordship on your most honourable acquittal at the late Court-Martial, would very faintly convey the satisfaction I feel at the decided victory you have gained over that firebrand Lord Cochrane, who had laid a train both to undermine your fame and the honourable character you so justly hold in the navy, as well as in private life. You will, I am sure (as well as your brothers), do me the justice to recollect that I had no hesitation upon my mind respecting asking for the Court-Martial. I know many people advised against it; but sure I am that nothing short of the investigation which has taken place would have satisfied the country or your own mind. The result has been everything you could have wished; and Lord Cochrane, instead of doing you the mischief he aimed at, has, by the investiga-

tion, been the means of raising your credit to the highest pitch, not only as a professional seaman, but as an officer of prudence and sound judgment, whom the nation hereafter may place a perfect reliance upon. Lady Hamond desires her kindest congratulations; and I remain, my dear Admiral,

Your sincerely attached friend,

A. S. HAMOND.

P. S.—I have been unlucky enough to have hurt my leg by a fall which has confined me for this fortnight past; otherwise I should have looked for you at Hampstead, where I hope all are well.

MR. FORBES* TO LORD GAMBIER.

Lower Seymour Street, Portman Square, 8th August, 1809.

My dear Lord, or rather would I say, my ever valued friend, permit me, among the number of those who will now offer their congratulations on the late event, to assure you that none can flow from a heart more warmly interested in your happiness. Although lately, by illness and other melancholy circumstances separated from your family, I have deeply felt your tender sympathy; and unwilling as I now am to intrude on your valuable

* Mr. Forbes' only daughter was the wife of the late, and mother of the present Count de Montalembert.

time, I could not be entirely silent upon a subject in which everything near and dear to you was so materially involved. I have, in my younger days, with Sterne's Eliza shed a tear over his affecting chapter of the sword in his Sentimental Journey: but my heart and eyes both felt much stronger impressions when I read the account of yours, with all its interesting accompaniments. That health and every other happiness may long attend you is the ardent wish of

My dear Lord,

Your obliged and affectionate friend,

JAMES FORBES.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN GORE TO LORD GAMBIER.

Avisford Place, near Arundel, August 8th.

My dear Lord,

I feel it a duty incumbent on me, as a naval officer and British subject, to offer my most sincere and lively congratulations to your Lordship for the triumph you have gained over malevolence and misrepresentation, and the exalted point of view your Lordship's reputation is so justly placed in, to the admiration of your countrymen, by the decision of the Court-Martial. And I beg leave to assure your Lordship, that among the numerous friends you possess, none more truly participates your feelings upon so honourable a proof of distinguished

merit, than I do; and I rejoice that these sentiments are in common with the profession at large.

The blow which was meditated at your Lordship's reputation has recoiled upon the instigators; and I trust that the justice done you by the sense of your brother officers will be a prelude and mark of approbation from our Sovereign and country.

Lady Gore begs permission (as one of our profession) to add her congratulations to your Lordship; and with our joint good wishes for your Lordship's health and happiness, I have the honour to subscribe myself, with high respect and sincère esteem,

Your Lordship's most obedient and faithful,
Humble servant,
JOHN GORE.

As regards the following—the reader will remember having been invited to infer that Sir H. Neale was silenced by the Court, and thus prevented from giving evidence of contrary tendency to that which he did give.*

* Vide Autobiography of a Seaman, vol. i., also pp. 198, 199, 190, of this volume.

SIR HARRY NEALE TO LORD GAMBIER.

Weymouth, August 31st.

My dear Lord,

I arrived here last night and have just received your letter of the 25th. The conduct of Ministers seems to be most extraordinary in whatever relates to the affair of Basques Roads, and they seem determined not to do anything handsome as a recompense for the service performed. They ought, immediately after your acquittal, to have given you some mark of approbation exceeding what had been bestowed upon Lord Cochrane; and they should have done something handsome for Stopford as second in command. With respect to myself, the kind of service was such as not to render it, I think, in any way necessary to bestow anything upon me beyond my £500.*

I fancy we shall remain here about two months, with as little to do, except making genteel bows, as any naval character can well manage *I think you were perfectly right in refusing the riband.* I have received an Admiralty order to hoist a broad pendant, and Captain Henry Spence is captain of the yacht.

Believe me, my dear Lord,
Yours very faithfully,
H. NEALE.

* The sum which is, or was given to flag-captains for carrying home Despatches after a victory.

As soon as the frigates and cutters ordered to attend at Weymouth arrive, I will let your Lordship know their names and commanders. At present I know nothing about them.

CAPTAIN HOTHAM,* TO LORD GAMBIER.

'Defiance,' Corunna, October 9th, 1809.

My Lord,

My late occupations in the Port of Ferrol, almost entirely engrossing my attention and employing my time, have caused a delay in my indulging in the gratification which I now enjoy of taking the liberty to offer to your Lordship my most sincere congratulations on the highly honourable result of the late Court-Martial, which your Lordship most indispensably found occasion to call for, and which must have caused great regret to every officer who feels any interest in the prosperity of the service, or in your Lordship's peace of mind. Your Lordship's unremitting attention and favour to me have bound me by the strongest ties most anxiously to wish that you may uninterruptedly enjoy peace and satisfaction.

With the purest sentiments of respect and humble esteem for your Lordship, inspired by the consideration and kindness which I have been

* Afterwards Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Hotham.

honoured with by your Lordship, I have taken the liberty to intrude on you on this occasion, and with the same, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's sincerely obliged,

And most faithful humble servant,

H. HOTHAM.

HANNAH MORE TO LORD BARHAM.

Barleywood, 8th March [1810].

My dear Lord,

I do indeed feel it a very long time since there has been any communication between us. Patty and I are impatiently waiting for a dry day to break our prison, to which we have been long confined.

What a tempestuous world do we live in! Yet terrible as Buonaparte is in every point of view, I do not fear him so much as those domestic mischiefs—Burdett, Cochrane, Wardle, and Cobbett. I hope, however, that the mortification Cochrane, &c., have lately experienced in their base and impotent endeavours to pull down reputations which they found unassailable, will keep them down a little.

We have had a visit here from the good and indefatigable Bishop of St. Davids. He is bringing a Bill into Parliament to get some aid for building his college, for the education of poor

Welsh parsons who cannot afford to go to the University, and is taking infinite pains to raise the tone of religion and knowledge in that hitherto neglected and ignorant class. I wish his revenues were larger.

Mr. Owen told me that two editions of Cœlebs had been printed at Boston in America.

I was much amused at the Persian Ambassador's opinion of our constitution. He says he does not like it at all, the King has not power enough. In *his* country *he* has already had two brothers and an uncle strangled by the Government, and he expects to lose his own head when he goes home for not delivering his credentials sooner, though he could not do it, there being no levee. There is no accounting for *taste*.

Yours &c.,

HANNAH MORE.

HANNAH MORE TO MR. MORTON PITT, M.P.

Barleywood, September 28th, 1816.

My dear Sir,

It is a very great pleasure to *me* to be remembered by you on any occasion, and I believe it would be difficult for any of your friends to call *you* to their recollection on any subject not connected with some benevolent association.

Many thanks for your kind letter and the very

interesting tract. It coincides so exactly with my own feelings that of course I cannot but admire and approve; I will endeavour to awaken some dormant spirit with the perusal of it. In our own large and populous parish what blessings would such a plan produce! But of such blessings *here* there is little hope. Lord D———, the proprietor, with an estate of £130,000 per annum, £6,000 of which he derives from this parish (*which he has never seen*), so far from bestowing or favourably letting grounds or gardens, does not give a single shilling to the poor, or even to the schools. In this time of general distress he has prudently, like many of his peers, put himself out of the possibility of hearing the cries of those who are ready to perish, by withdrawing to Paris for a long time.

Apropos of Paris, I beg leave to recommend to your perusal a poem entitled "Emigration," written by a very ingenious young friend of mine. He has, I think, happily caught Cowper's manner. I feel interested on account of the author, and especially the subject.

I beg to be most affectionately remembered to Mrs. Pitt. How happy should I be to see you both once more! But I do not think my health will allow me to take any more journeys. You will, however, conclude it to be better than it really is when I tell you that at the late Bible

Meeting in this village, we entertained above sixty gentlemen and ladies at dinner, and a hundred and twenty at tea in our cottage; the good Bishop of Gloucester and twenty-five clergymen of the Established Church were among the number.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with real regard,

Your very faithful and obliged

H. More.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the 30th of July, 1814, Lord Gambier was appointed head of the Commission for negotiating a Treaty of Peace with the United States. It is needless to enter into the *pros* and *cons* started and settled at that conference—they being well known. As the reader is probably aware, it took place at Ghent, and lasted between four and five months—namely, from August the 8th to December the 24th, when the preliminaries of peace were signed and ratified at Washington, Feb. 17th, 1815.

The Ministry took advantage of the service above recorded, to press upon Lord Gambier's acceptance the Order of the Bath, which he had refused five years before, for reasons stated in a former page of this volume. He received the insignia of a Grand Cross on the 7th of June following.

TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

Foreign Office, 26th December, 1814.

My Lords and gentlemen,

Mr. Baker arrived at this office at half-past two

this afternoon, with the Treaty of Peace between His Majesty and the United States of America, signed by you and the American Plenipotentiaries on the 24th instant.

I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that the Treaty of Peace, so concluded, has received the approbation of the Prince Regent; and I have received His Royal Highness's command to signify to you his most gracious approbation of the conduct which you have pursued throughout the course of the negotiation, &c., &c.

(Signed) BATHURST.

MR. WILBERFORCE TO LORD GAMBIER.

Barham Court, December 27th, 1814.

My dear friend,

I cannot resist the impulse I feel to send you my cordial congratulations on your long labours having at length been closed, as I have just now learned, by the restoration of peace with the United States of America. It was not necessary for any one to be as well acquainted with you as I am, to be convinced that you have been employed in an office more congenial with your principles and feelings, in being the instrument of restoring peace, than in your professional occupation of carrying on war; and yet if you have seen and read all that even our newspapers have given us of American

compositions and threatenings and false accusations, you must have been tempted, as I own I have been at times myself, to long to inflict on the detestable American Government some of those evils which they so unprovokedly brought upon, and still more unprovokedly continued to their country. But here the religion of the blessed Jesus steps in, and forces on me with irresistible authority the duties of peace and love; and I am reminded, also, that there are in the United States numbers of true Christians, attached from the heart to the Institutions, the religious and moral interests and objects of Great Britain, and to many of the inhabitants of this country. Yet the continuance of war would have, by degrees, infused even into their heads principles and feelings of malignity. But when I began to write to you, dinner was on table; and I must stay away no longer. My dear friend, may God bless and comfort you. Will you take this place in the way to London, if but for one night? The road is better. Farewell, adieu.

Your affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

On the 22nd of July, 1830, Lord Gambier was promoted to the rank of Admiral of the Fleet.

On the 20th of July, 1832, he was presented with a Field Marshal's baton—the first, and (as I

believe) the last given to an Admiral of the Fleet as a badge of office. He was then infirm, suffering, and nearly blind. He died the following year.

With the baton he received the following autograph letter from King William the Fourth.

WILLIAM IV. TO LORD GAMBIER.

Windsor Castle, July 20th, 1832.

The King has great satisfaction in transmitting to Admiral Lord Gambier the accompanying baton, which His Majesty has caused to be made for the purpose of being presented to him, as Admiral of the Fleet, and which His Majesty desires Lord Gambier will receive as a testimonial of his personal regard, and of the estimation in which he holds his long, faithful and meritorious services.

(*Signed*) WILLIAM R.

Lord Gambier's letter of thanks was as follows:

Iver, 21st July, 1832.

Your Majesty's gracious permission is most humbly and most respectfully entreated by Admiral Lord Gambier, that he may lay at your Majesty's feet the tribute of his deep-felt gratitude for the high honour and condescending kindness

your Majesty has graciously shewn, in conferring upon him the baton of a Field-Marshal, with your royal commands that he should receive it as a memorial of your Majesty's obliging personal regard and gracious approbation of his humble but zealous services for the country. Lord Gambier is quite at a loss for language adequately to express the sense that he feels of this signal mark of honour from your Majesty's hands. He greatly regrets that indisposition and the infirmities of advanced age have deprived him, for some time past, of the gratifying honour of paying his dutiful respects to your Majesty. But he begs leave humbly to assure your Majesty that his fervent prayers have been continually presented to the Throne of Mercy that Almighty God may be pleased to shed abundantly on your Majesty and on her Majesty, the Queen, the blessings of His grace, favour and protection—which he will not cease to do while he lives.

I have not entered upon Lord Gambier's private life—believing such details to be unacceptable to the majority of readers: but, believing also that a short sketch of a public man, in his own home, *is* acceptable, I reprint the following description of him.

* * * *

"Nothing recalls so forcibly to my mind past scenes, as the smell of flowers. Geranium reminds me of a series of years from childhood; let me turn to the picture which it vividly brings before me. I hear the tones of a man's voice—a voice which, like the noble frame from which it proceeded, seemed born to command. What heart was sufficiently hard to withstand his firm and persuasive accents?

I see a man who had passed the greater part of his life in the din of war amidst the raging billows, kneeling in prayer. On the table near him lies a book; but he does not read—he prays: every feature in his speaking and noble countenance is elevated with an expression of adoration. The naturally haughty brow is calm, the mouth accustomed to command seems now only to embody the idea, "Peace and good will to man."

Around him are the kneeling forms of his relations and servants. A bright beam of morning sunshine slants across the room; and on the polished surface of the old oak floor are seen the shadows cast by a profusion of flowers which decorated the verandah outside. The most prominent is that of the bright scarlet geranium, my Uncle Gambier's favourite flower.

The prayer is ended; and one by one the servants depart. How well do I remember the creaking of

the old housekeeper's shoes, and the heavy tread of the butler as it echoed fainter and fainter through the passage—then the distant banging of the green baize door which separates the offices from the other apartments.

And how plainly do I see my dear uncle walking among the flowers, enjoying that silent pleasure which a heart keenly alive to the beauties of nature can alone understand. His was mingled with a higher feeling. His eyes seemed to say: "If this world is so beautiful, what will be the loveliness of that where the Saviour dwells?" Hope and a firm assurance of a better life were mingled with that good man's present joy.

Years are past; yet still I see him kneeling at his morning prayer. His voice is feebler, and the white hairs are fewer on his still furrowless brow: fewer also are the expressions of worldly cares depicted there. He rises from his kneeling posture with difficulty—an expression of acute pain is seen for an instant on his countenance, as he endeavours to reach the verandah. He leans on the arm of his sister: he can scarcely see the beautiful flowers—their sweet perfume can scarcely reach his decaying senses, yet he knows his favourite flowers are there; and he exclaims in a tone more joyful than ever: "How beautiful are the works of God!"

Again other years pass by; and I return to the old oak room.

The same servants kneel there—the same prayers are uttered; but the voice is another's—that of an aged woman, a wife—who prays that her husband may recover. In an adjoining room lies the master of the house dangerously ill.

Many fervent prayers were offered for his recovery by all who knew him. In vain—his hour was come!

Gladly and peacefully he obeyed the blissful summons: his last words expressed the joy and hope of a true Christian. He thought not of himself—his thoughts and his heart were with his Saviour: and though his life had been blameless, though he had endeavoured in every action to live for the honour of his Maker—yet the consciousness of any merit in himself never crossed his mind. If there ever lived an humble-minded and unselfish man, *that* man was Lord Gambier."

CHAPTER XIX.

Thus ends this compilation; and if it succeeds in its main object—that of placing before the public, in his rightful character, an honest man and meritorious public servant calumniated for more than half a century—I shall be repaid with usurious interest for the labour and anxiety of handling a subject singularly painful and delicate.

I believe that it will—that it must do so—from the inherent force of truth, and the readiness with which the public mind in this country opens to its revelations at all times, but more particularly when justice to the injured is involved in its manifestation.

In detailing only services of intrinsic importance, I hoped and believed that I was anticipating the reader's wishes. I believed that the varied correspondence of people eminently noted in their day, and connected with Lord Gambier by blood or friendship, would be more acceptable than the names of his schoolmasters and a paraphrase of his log-books.

Moreover those letters form links between the middle of the last century and the latter part of this. The letters describing respectively the marriage of the elder, and the birth of the younger William Pitt, carry us from the confines of the Walpole régime, over the bloody Rubicon of 1793, into the great struggle with Napoleon; and thence, through Mr. Wilberforce, the friend and independent supporter of the younger Pitt, the links are extended, over the Reform Bill, to the days when Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary, and Lord John Russell Paymaster of the Forces. Thus much as regards the links in the chain of years.

The connection between the correspondents is no less clear. The Pitts, Middletons and Gambiers were, as before mentioned, connected by intermarriages; whilst Lady Middleton's share in the anti-slavery crusade, and Mrs. Bouverie's large original subscriptions to the Mendip schools, associate their two names respectively with those of Wilberforce and Hannah More. But this inter-connection is, with its further details, already known to the reader—whose patience I, however, would crave yet once more, touching the relative proportions between my promises and their fulfilment.

I premised that the principal correspondents were, each in some way or other, possessed of a distinct individuality. To predicate this of Lord Chatham would subject the predicator to be saluted

with the standard reply of French gamins—"Connu:" but would that answer honestly result from the generally-received estimates of Hannah More? I cannot help thinking that it would not. Conversational experience seems to shew that one section of the Christian Church estimates her literary talents altogether above their fair value, whilst another rates them as much below it—a third acknowledging her practical usefulness, and respecting her for the untiring energy so resulting. But none seem to have enquired why her name stands forth to posterity unrivalled—one may almost say unapproachable—for success in a mission peculiarly and originally her own.

A careful analysis of the salient points in Hannah More's character, as evidenced in her life and writings, encourages the hypothesis—that her immense success resulted, in a great measure, from qualities which, when viewed in combination, appear contradictory of each other. I mean—that the ideas she gave to the world, and the language in which she clothed them, were so strictly commonplace as to calm apprehension among that very large and necessary portion of a public constituency whose hearts are large, and minds narrow; whilst, at the same time, the direct tendency of her labours was broadly extended and two-fold in its action.

In fact, broadness of scope and narrowness of

detail are combined in her to an extent so singularly remarkable, and harmonizing so prolifically in their practical results, as to invite the conclusion —not only that her admirers may fairly claim for her the attribute before predicated, but that they may challenge competition with the individuality of any other publicly known person, as regards adaptiveness for the peculiar mission she fulfilled.

But it is the misfortune of all particular reformers, that the requirements which called forth their services pass away, whilst their mannerisms remain on record in unshaded outlines. Moreover those mannerisms are not unfrequently exaggerated and distorted by self-appointed disciples in after generations. Thus one's lip involuntarily curls when Hannah More speaks with a kind of fat complacency of the Christian's faith—calling it "a Christian profession," to the apparent exclusion of all not belonging to a certain religious guild; and the continuous soreness kept up by relays of such expressions, that irritate without touching a vital spot in one's conscience, is too apt to make non-members of the craft shut their eyes to those facts which justly entitle her to be revered by succeeding generations.

Yet abstractly those facts are known through hearsay, through contemporary writings, and through the oral testimony of people still living. Of the stagnant condition into which the Church

of England fell, after the Roman Catholics had been driven from competition by penal statutes worthy of the King of Naples, and Puritanism had exhausted itself by its own impracticable fanaticism—evidence is too abundant for selection, and perhaps too well known for repetition. We do not absolutely require to read Cœlebs in order to hear of Sunday drawing-rooms and card-parties, uprooting the one visible fact shewn by Protestantism to the toilers of great cities, in exchange for their lost fêtes—nor is Martha More's diary the only source of information respecting itinerant curates of questionable character, doing the duty of five or six parishes: but, between *acknowledging* an historical fact, and *feeling* a contemporary one, there is a large blank space. It is very difficult to *feel* thoroughly and convincedly that Hannah More was of *necessity* somewhat exclusive in language and habits seventy years ago; nor is it easy to appreciate the exact significance *then* attached to many expressions that have since acquired other and more sectarian meanings: but surely it would be yet more difficult to reflect largely and impartially on Hannah More's life, comparatively with her epoch, and deny to her the attribute of individuality.

The name of Wilberforce being world-famed, it will perhaps seem impertinent to venture the hypothesis—that no man of publicly acknowledged

merit has been more misunderstood by a large percentage of posterity: but I cannot help thinking that the sneers which he reaped so abundantly, as the first fruits of his collision with crime disguised in the venerated garb of vested interests, cling implicitly to his name, in the form of honest and respectful calumniation.

Notwithstanding the vast amount of contemporary evidence gleanable from people now living—notwithstanding the testimony given without reserve by one singularly conversant with and politically unbiassed on the subject*—I believe that most of us implicitly underrate Mr. Wilberforce, both as to the calibre of his intellect and the force of his idiosyncrasy.

A slight examination of the process by which we arrive at half-acknowledged conclusions in matters not of immediate interest, will perhaps clarify my meaning. I think none of us can boast with much security of not allowing our notions respecting public characters to be modified by the deportment of their followers, and one's judgment of public measures by their last conspicuous effect. Thus the true colours of Mr. Wilberforce's fame have, I firmly believe, been dimmed by reflection from

* Lord Brougham, in his Biographical Sketches. Surely one may say politically unbiassed—for though they sympathized politically in the matter of the Slave Trade, they habitually sat on opposite benches.

people whose names unworthily jostle against his, in unindividualized masses; and the abstract wisdom of slave-abolition has been lessened, in the eyes of at least a large minority, by the wholesale ruin since resulting from it. But high soaring above all presumptive evidence is the well recorded fact, that Wilberforce systematically sacrificed his brilliant talents, to toil against the opposition and ridicule of men immeasurably his inferiors; and a calm revision of affairs, as they stood when slavery was abolished, leads one insensibly to doubt whether a progressive abolition would have been possible. If such be the case, we can only rejoice at our purification from a great national crime, and feel that—

> "Cuncta prius tentanda; sed immedicabile vulnus
> Ense recidendum est, ne pars sincera trahatur."

But of those whose names have unjustly suffered by juxtaposition and indirect inferences, there is no instance more closely representative than that of Lord Gambier. Because he had the pluck to avow unostentatiously his honest and simple faith, at a period when such an avowal was equivalent to being morally pilloried and branded as either a Methodist or a Jesuit—he has been handed down to posterity as a narrow-minded, pharisaical sectarian—against the distinct testimony of men who served afloat under him—and against the fact that, in 1830, he voted in the House of Lords for the Ca-

tholic Emancipation, to the annoyance of many personal friends and dismay of the religious party, whose views he is *now* affirmed to have held bigotedly.

In truth—though his personal bravery, trustworthiness in command, and general high tone of character stand recorded by the most respectable and best informed witnesses, the details of his very remarkable organisation have never been fairly compared and harmonized. Constitutionally fearless and by temperament inclined to dashing enterprises—conscientiously prudent in the required interest of the public service—singularly broad and exempt from party bias in his political opinions—proudly patient under foul calumnies and poisonous insinuations—Lord Gambier was deficient in two defensive qualities, without which quiet merit is too apt to be jostled out of the road to fame by loud-tongued competition. Those qualities were self-esteem and ambition. Of the former he had but just enough to secure firmness of purpose—the latter was absolutely non-existent.

Hence the only literary record of his gallantry on the 1st of June is to be found in a periodical now out of print; and his management of an *arduous unrewarded duty*, fifteen years later, has remained unexplained and undefended, save in the forgotten Minutes of a Court-Martial.

His case evidences in a remarkable degree the difficulty of obtaining correct information respect-

ing the merits of any public character, when the grave has closed over him and his generation, and oral witnesses are reduced to a few scattered units. Having, as a post-captain, singularly distinguished himself in an action whose date is engraved on every Englishman's memory, the first of June, 1794—having obtained important commands without drawing on the family interest which he possessed in abundance—having, when in office at the Admiralty, revised an obsolete code of signals, and successfully designed two ships—having laboured much and well to improve the comfort and moral feeling of the men under his command—having received unsought the highest dignity in the navy from a sailor-king—having on one occasion saved the British colonies in the West Indies, and on another rescued his country from imminent peril of invasion—he appears before posterity in the pages of Lord Dundonald's Autobiography, in the form of a weak, incapable puppet, set up by the Government as a sop to Evangelical voters and a general insult to deserving officers.

The statements I have made respecting Lord Gambier's personal character and qualities are from the most careful and laboriously minute examination of people in whom knowledge of the subject was long, intimate and varied, whilst the total absence of bias in his favour is singularly satisfactory and convincing. The few remarks on

The extract respecting M. Pitt is taken from Hutchin's History of Dorset. 2? Edition Vol IV. P. 92. (Westminster 1815)

his general merits as a commanding officer are, I think, well borne out by his acts, and such parts of the correspondence as refer to them—particularly Admiral Bowen's letter of the year 1809, and the evidence of Admiral Stopford, Sir John (then Captain) Beresford, &c. on the Court-Martial. They have also been further confirmed by extensive oral testimony from officers, petty-officers and seamen who had served under him—one of the last survivors having, in my own presence, endorsed all their statements a few days since.

Therefore if I have appeared to exceed my duty as a compiler, the national love of fair play will, I am persuaded, plead my excuse. I could not, in common honesty, withhold truth that met me half way.

To analyse the remaining correspondents would be tiresome and impertinent. I have endeavoured to stop just short of obscurity.

As the letters draw to an end, the grave closes over some of the latest survivors.

* Morton Pitt outlived most of his contemporaries. He died in 1836. May his many kind acts and his bitter reverses of fortune be placed to his account in "the undiscovered country."

Hannah More died a few months after him, who, forty-four years before, had suggested and principally supported the schools which have made her name famous. The same year died Lord Gambier in his simple manly faith. God rest his soul!

* William Morton Pitt Esq of Kingston Maurward County Dorset, was born 16th May 1754, & died at Dorchester 29th Feb 1836, & was buried at Stinsford near

POSTSCRIPT.

The second volume of the "Autobiography of a Seaman" having been published since the foregoing pages went to press, I have been obliged to add the following *Postscript*, in notice of some fresh misstatements therein referring to Lord Gambier.

Lord Dundonald says, at page 3, that the Ministry did not submit the Vote of Thanks to Parliament until six months after the Court-Martial; but he omits the following explanatory figures:

The Session of 1809 closed on the 21st of June; and the Court-Martial assembled on the 26th of the following July. Parliament re-opened on the 23rd of January, 1810, and the Vote of Thanks passed the House of Commons six days after, viz., on the 29th.

1809	June 21. . .	Session closed.
	July 26th. . .	Court-Martial assembled.
1810	January 23.	Parliament re-opened.
	January 29.	Vote of Thanks by the Commons.

At page 37, Lord Dundonald acknowledges that THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAVE OFFICIALLY ADOPTED MR. STOKES'S CHART, which he, (Lord Dundonald), there and elsewhere, in both volumes, calls a *fabrication*;* and this he endeavours to explain away by the hypothesis, that it has been done to deter future hostile fleets from entering Aix Roads. In other words—a government of singular administrative sagacity, issues charts—*not* for the use of its own increasing navy, but for the deception of future hostile admirals.

Credat Judæus!

The simple fact that Mr. Stokes's alterations have been adopted by the French Government, renders further defence of his chart unnecessary; nevertheless it may not be amiss to refer the reader back to p.p. 116, 117, 118, 119 of this volume, where the matter is fully treated. I would only remark in this place, that when the French fleet shifted their berths from Basques into Aix Roads, the 'Jean Bart' (74) was irrecoverably wrecked, though not a single hostile vessel was near.

* Autobiography of a Seaman, vol. i. p. 360. "One of these men [the Masters] constructed a chart of the soundings and of his own personal knowledge, and *in his verbal evidence said he had never sounded at all.*" Also p. 116 of this vol.

Autobiography of a Seaman, vol. ii. p. 31, &c. "There is little question in my mind but that this chart had been fabricated under the auspices of Mr. Lavie, Lord Gambier's solicitor."

At page 41. Lord Dundonald says that Admiral Sir Francis, then (1809) Captain Austen, was present in Basques Roads, but not examined on the Court-Martial.

The published Minutes, or any other authentic record of the circumstances, will shew that the officer in question was *not* present in Basques Roads: in fact, he was then on his way to China.

"In April (1809) Captain Austen sailed, with seven of the East India Company's ships under his protection, for China, where he arrived in September, and pursuant to his orders, remained there to convoy them home."*

At page 42. Lord Dundonald says that he was appointed to command the fire-ships, "after *all others had declined the enterprise.*" His Lordship appears to have forgotten that, in the first volume of his Autobiography, he records the disappointment of the other captains at having a junior officer appointed to that command, and the indignation of Admiral Harvey at not having been appointed after having volunteered for it. Moreover, Lord Gambier wrote, in his despatch of April 14th:—†

* Marshall's Naval Biography, vol. ii. part i. p. 231. See also O'Byrne's Naval Biography.

† Vide Appendix to this volume. Also Minutes, p. 8, also Minutes of a Court-Martial on Rear-Admiral Harvey.

"It is due to Rear-Admiral Stopford and Sir Harry Neale, that I should here take the opportunity of acquainting their Lordships of the handsome and earnest manner in which these officers had volunteered their services before the arrival of Lord Cochrane."

At page 88, Lord Dundonald accuses the Master's Mate of the 'Beagle,' Mr. Thompson, of having "tampered with" the log of that gun-brig. The facts are as follows: The Solicitor for the prosecution having asked Mr. Thompson why, on the 12th, three signals were entered in the column for winds, &c. instead of in the body of the log, the latter replied: that in copying from the Master's log-board, which he did every day at twelve o'clock, he had, on that day, omitted those signals, and, at once observing the omission, entered them where there was room. The Judge-Advocate and the President severally remarked that there was no imputation whatever upon him. *Vide Minutes, page* 35-6.

Consequent upon which accusation, it may not be amiss to add, that the Master of Lord Cochrane's ship, the 'Impérieuse,' acknowledged having, on the 12th, written part of his log from memory, some hours after the occurrences which he therein recorded. *Ibid, page* 33.

At page 102, Lord Dundonald thus alludes to the attack made on the Isle d'Aix, in

1757, by Captain Howe, under Sir Edward Hawke.

"The best comment, perhaps, on the whole affair of Aix Roads, is what had previously been effected with a less force than that under Lord Gambier."

His Lordship goes on to quote from the Naval Chronicle:

". . . . Captain Howe (afterwards Earl Howe) in the 'Magnanime' led the van. He dropped his anchor under the very walls. It was, however, near an hour before the Fort struck its colours."

The best comment, perhaps, upon the above, is the following passage from the Naval Chronicle—the authority referred to in this matter by his Lordship.*

July 25th, 1799. At sea, off the Isle of Oléron.

"The Isle d'Aix is as strong as the best engineer the French had in 1782 could make it. The interior work, or citadel, is elevated considerably, and has many guns mounted on the new manner, *en barbet,* by which these are worked without danger, as was shown off Corsica, where one gun only, *disabled two of our line-of-battle ships. Had this battery been in the same state as when Lord Howe attacked it, in* 1757, *no difficulty could have occurred.* This the Admiralty seem to have been

* Autobiography of a Seaman, vol. ii. p. 102.

well aware of, as the Admiral, by his orders, was only permitted to anchor in Basques Roads. *Extract of a letter, giving an account of the attack on the Isle d'Aix in* 1799. *Naval Chronicle, Vol. II., page* 252.

The reader will find this letter given in full, at page 325 of this volume.

At page 103, Lord Dundonald says, speaking of this fort on the Isle d'Aix, taken by Captain Howe:

"This was the very fort, only now in ruins, or to use Lord Gambier's words, '*no obstacle, from the dilapidated condition of the fortifications.*'"

The simple fact is, that Lord Gambier did not say so.

His words were as follows:

"*The advanced work between the Isles of Aix and Oléron* (on the Boyart),* was injured in its foundation, and is in no state of progress: *that is*, therefore, no obstacle to our bombarding the enemy's fleet." *Lord Gambier's despatch of March the* 11*th*, 1809.

For the full particulars respecting this thrice-repeated distortion of a public despatch, the reader is referred back to pp. 107-8 of this volume.

* Vide note in the Minutes, p. 115.

APPENDIX.

Lord Gambier's private despatch, of May 10th, on being asked for more particulars by the First Lord of the Admiralty.

LORD GAMBIER TO LORD MULGRAVE.

London, 10th May, 1809.

My Lord,

Although I have, in my public letter in answer to Mr. Pole's of the 2nd instant, and in consequence of your Lordship's letter to me of the 5th instant, treated the subject to which they relate as merely explanatory, I cannot but think it right, in replying to your Lordship's letter above-mentioned, to submit the following observations to your consideration.

Your Lordship cannot fail to perceive how much the coincidence of very providential circumstances has contributed to render the result of the enterprise against the enemy's fleet in Aix Roads so

complete as it proved. The attack of a fleet by fire-ships must always be a service of peculiar hazard and doubtful result, particularly of one lying under the protection of formidable batteries, and so prepared against such an attack as to have placed a boom in advance for their protection, and taken every possible precaution to guard against a surprise.

It will be observed that I have noticed, in my public letter, a signal made by Lord Cochrane, in the morning of the 12th April, that seven of the enemy's ships were on shore, and that half the fleet could destroy them, and I have done so that I might be scrupulously faithful in reciting every occurrence.

Without detracting from the merit of Lord Cochrane, whose ardour and enthusiasm are unbounded, it must yet rest with me to judge whether half, or any other proportion of the fleet, should be put to such imminent hazard, in attempting the destruction of the enemy's grounded ships, and I know the opinion I acted upon, on this point, to have had the concurrence, not only of Lord Cochrane, but also of Rear-Admiral Stopford, and every captain of the fleet under my command. Lord Cochrane, indeed, on his return from in-shore, stated to me, that had I acted in compliance with his signal, he reckoned upon three ships being lost. Had the wind been favourable at the time for

entering and returning, and the enemy been disposed to remain where they were, I should not have hesitated to take advantage of their confusion and disorder, and sent in such part of the fleet immediately as might be necessary to effect the destruction of their ships; but under circumstances which existed at the time, it would have been unpardonable in me to have put to such hazard more of the line-of-battle ships than I did. I cannot but conclude that the consideration that actuated my conduct throughout this service must be satisfactory to your Lordship, nor could I be induced to dwell upon the subject, if it was not as an explanation to any opinion which that signal might give rise to. That the destruction of three sail of the line, a fifty gun ship and two frigates, besides considerable injury being done to seven other ships of the enemy, should have been effected, and that in a roadstead where they had upon former occasions been deemed secure from attack, surely merits to be considered as a brilliant exploit, both as to its immediate effect and ultimate consequences, and I do not believe there is an instance upon record wherein so much has been accomplished with the singularly small loss of ten killed and thirty-eight men wounded, and without any one of His Majesty's ships having been injured upon the occasion. Though, perhaps, had we lost two or three ships, and sacrificed the

lives of a great number of men, the achievement would have been better received by the public.

I cannot omit to mention a circumstance which strongly evinces our great good fortune upon this occasion. A paper, in my possession, which was found on board one of the enemy's ships, shows, the extent and arrangement of seventy-three guard-boats of their fleet, by which it appears how completely it was protected from the assault of fire-ships had the attack taken place the preceding night, or any other but that on which it did, when it blew so strong that the guard-boats could not advance to look out.

This leads me to the mention of another circumstance equally fortunate. After the accomplishment of the destruction of the enemy's four ships, the 'Cæsar,' 'Theseus,' 'Valiant,' and 'Revenge' (three of which had grounded) were exposed to the fire from the enemy's batteries. In this situation they would have been found at daylight in the morning, had not a providential shift of wind, when the flood-tide floated them, enabled them to escape from their danger. I will trouble your Lordship no further at present than to add, that I feel so perfectly conscious of having fulfilled my duty in every respect, that I cannot hesitate to express my confidence, not only that my good fortune will excite your Lordship's admiration, but that my conduct throughout will meet with

your fullest approbation; and I shall hope to receive such a reply to my public letter as will be gratifying to my feelings.

I have, &c.

GAMBIER.

LORD GAMBIER TO THE RIGHT HON. W. W. POLE.

'Caledonia,' at anchor in Basque Roads, April 14, 1800.

Sir,

The Almighty's favour to His Majesty and the nation has been strongly marked in the success he has been pleased to give to the operations of His Majesty's fleet under my command; and I have the satisfaction to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the four ships of the enemy, named in the margin,* have been destroyed at their anchorage, and several others, from getting on shore, if not rendered altogether unserviceable, are, at least, disabled for a considerable time.

The arrangement of the fire-vessels, placed under the direction of Captain the Right Hon. Lord Cochrane, was made as fully as the state of the weather would admit, according to his Lordship's plan, on the evening of the 11th instant: and at eight o'clock on the same night, they proceeded to the attack, under a favourable strong wind from the northward, and flood tide (preceded by some vessels filled with powder and shells, as proposed by his Lordship, with a view to explosion), and led on, in the

* 'Ville de Varsovie,' of 80 guns; 'Tonnerre,' of 74 guns; 'Aquilon,' of 74 guns; and 'Calcutta,' of 36 guns.

most undaunted and determined manner, by Captain Wooldridge, in the 'Mediator' fire-ship, the others following in succession; but owing to the darkness of the night, several mistook their course, and failed.

On their approach to the enemy's ships, it was discovered that a boom was placed in front of their line for a defence. This, however, the weight of the 'Mediator' soon broke, and the usual intrepidity and bravery of British seamen overcame all difficulties, advancing under a heavy fire from the forts in the Isle of Aix, as well as from the enemy's ships, most of which cut or slipt their cables, and, from the confined anchorage, got on shore, and thus avoided taking fire.

At daylight, the following morning, Lord Cochrane communicated to me, by telegraph, that seven of the enemy's ships were on shore, and might be destroyed. I immediately made the signal for the fleet to unmoor and weigh, intending to proceed with it to effect their destruction. The wind, however, being fresh from the northward and the flood-tide running, rendering it too hazardous to run into Aix Roads (from its shaalow water), I therefore anchored again at the distance of about three miles from the forts on the Island.

As the tide suited, the enemy evinced great activity in endeavouring to warp their ships (which had grounded) into deep water, and succeeded in getting all but five of the line towards the entrance of the Charente, before it became practicable to attack them.

I gave orders to Captain Bligh, of the 'Valiant,' to proceed with that ship, the 'Revenge,' frigates, bombs, and small vessels, named in the margin,* to anchor near

* 'Indefatigable,' 'Unicorn,' 'Aigle,' 'Emerald,' 'Pallas,'

the Boyart shoal, in readiness for the attack. At twenty minutes past two P.M., Lord Cochrane advanced in the 'Impérieuse,' with his accustomed gallantry and spirit, and opened a well-directed fire upon the 'Calcutta,' which struck her colours to the 'Impérieuse.' The ships and vessels above-mentioned soon after joined in the attack upon the 'Ville de Varsovie' and 'Aquilon,' and obliged them, before five o'clock, after sustaining a heavy cannonade, to strike their colours, when they were taken possession of by the boats of the advanced squadron. As soon as the prisoners were removed, they were set on fire, as was also the 'Tonnerre' a short time after, by the enemy. I afterwards detached Rear-Admiral the Honourable Robert Stopford, in the 'Cæsar,' with the 'Theseus,' three additional fire-ships (which were hastily prepared in the course of the day), and all the boats of the fleet, with Mr. Congreve's rockets, to conduct the further operations of the night against any of the ships which lay exposed to an attack.

On the morning of the 13th, the Rear-Admiral reported to me, that as the 'Cæsar' and other line-of-battle ships had grounded, and were in a dangerous situation, he thought it advisable to order them all out, particularly as the remaining part of the service could be performed by frigates and small vessels only; and I was happy to find that they were extricated from their perilous situation.

Captain Bligh has since informed me that it was found impracticable to destroy the three-decked ship and the others which were lying near the entrance of the Charente, as the former, being the outer one, was protected by three

'Beagle,' 'Etna' bomb, 'Insolent' gun-brig, 'Conflict,' 'Encounter,' 'Fervent' and 'Growler,'

lines of boats placed in advance of her. This ship and all the others, except four of the line, and a frigate, have now moved up the Charente. If any further attempt to destroy them is practicable, I shall not fail to use every means in my power to accomplish it.

I have great satisfaction in stating to their Lordships how much I feel obliged to the zealous co-operation of Rear-Admiral Stopford, under whose arrangement the boats of the fleet were placed; and I must also express to their Lordships the high sense I have of the assistance I received from the abilities and unremitted attention of Sir Harry Neale, Bart., the captain of the fleet, as well as of the animated exertions of the captains, officers, seamen, and marines under my command, and their forwardness to volunteer upon any service that might be allotted to them, particularly the zeal and activity shewn by the captains of line-of-battle ships in preparing the fire-vessels. I cannot speak in sufficient terms of admiration and applause of the vigorous and gallant attack made by Lord Cochrane upon the French line-of-battle ships which were on shore, as well as of his judicious manner in approaching them, and placing his ship in a position most advantageous to annoy the enemy and preserve his own ship, which could not be exceeded by any feat of valour hitherto achieved by the British navy.

It is due to Rear-Admiral Stopford and Sir Harry Neale, that I should here take the opportunity of acquainting their Lordships of the handsome and earnest manner in which both these meritorious officers had volunteered their services, before the arrival of Lord Cochrane, to undertake an attack upon the enemy with fire-ships; and that, had not their Lordships fixed upon him to con-

duct the enterprise, I have full confidence that the result of their efforts would have been highly creditable to them. Not having had it in my power, as yet, to ascertain the conduct of the officers commanding the fire-ships, except that of the 'Mediator,' I am under the necessity of deferring to state how far they fulfilled their duty on this hazardous service in which they were engaged.

I should feel that I did not do justice to the services of Captain Godfrey, of the 'Etna,' in bombarding the enemy's ships on the 12th, and nearly all the day of the 13th, if I did not recommend him to their Lordships' notice; and I cannot omit bearing due testimony to the anxious desire expressed by Mr. Congreve to be employed wherever I might conceive his services, in the management of his rockets, would be useful. Some of them were placed in the fire-ships with effect, and I have every reason to be satisfied with the artillerymen and others, who had the management of them, under Mr. Congreve's direction.

I send herewith a return of the killed, wounded, and missing of the fleet, which, I am happy to observe, is comparatively small. I have not yet received the return of the number of prisoners taken, but I conceive they amount to between four and five hundred.

I have charged Sir Harry Neale with the despatch (by the 'Impérieuse'), and I beg leave to refer their Lordships to him, as also to Lord Cochrane, for any further particulars of which they may wish to be informed.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

(*Signed*) GAMBIER.

LORD GAMBIER TO THE HON. W. W. POLE.

London, 10th May, 1809.

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 2nd inst., acknowledging the receipt of the list, containing the names of the officers and men employed in the fire-ships and explosion-vessels on the night of the 11th ult., with my observations on the result of my enquiry respecting their conduct on that occasion, and signifying that you are commanded by their Lordships to acquaint me, that, in order to have before them full and complete information of the proceedings of the several ships employed by me, on the various branches of the very important operations carried on against the enemy's fleet in Aix Road, it is their Lordships' direction that I should call upon Rear-Admiral Stopford, Captain Bligh, Captain Lord Cochrane, and any other officer I may have entrusted with any part of that service, to report to me their proceedings, together with such observations and remarks as they may have made whilst they were executing my orders against the enemy; and that I should transmit the same to their Lordships, with any observations I may think proper to make thereon.

You will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that I have written to those officers to make reports to me accordingly and shall lose no time in transmitting them to you as soon as they are obtained, but some time must elapse before they can reach me. From communications I have since had with their Lordships, I am led to understand that a more full and detailed account, than I have transmitted, of the proceedings of the fleet under my command during the whole of its operations in Basque

Roads, would be desirable. I shall, therefore, in making such a statement, endeavour to omit no incident that may be in any degree connected with those operations, or serve to elucidate the various movements and proceedings of the fleet, persuaded that doing so cannot fail to promote the satisfaction, which, in common with the officers and men under my command, I feel upon that occasion, and on the success which has resulted from it. Their Lordships are aware that soon after I had taken the anchorage of Basque Roads, I stated to them the strong position of the enemy's fleet in Aix Roads; that their ships were moored in two compact lines, and the most distant ship of each line within point-blank range of the batteries of Isle d'Aix, explaining at the same time that they were under the necessity of mooring in such close order, not for the purpose of opposing a more formidable front, but to avoid the shoals close around the anchorage. And their Lordships will also remember that I then pointed out the impracticability of destroying them by an attack with the ships of the line in the position they occupied, but that I considered them to be assailable by fire-ships, having previously suggested to Lord Mulgrave the expediency of sending out twenty or thirty vessels for that purpose.

The suggestion was anticipated by their Lordships, and they were pleased to order twelve sail of fire-ships to join me, and to direct me to fit out eight others on the spot.

Upon the arrival of Captain Lord Cochrane, whom their Lordships had ordered me to employ in conducting the execution of the service to be performed by the fire-ships, I was induced, at his suggestion, to add the 'Mediator' to the number. These preparations were completed on the 11th ultimo, at night, and having previously called on

board the 'Caledonia' the commanders and lieutenants who had volunteered their services, and who had been appointed by me to command fire-vessels, I furnished them with full instructions for their proceedings in the attack, according to Lord Cochrane's plan, and arranged the disposition of the frigates and small vessels to co-operate in the following manner.

The 'Unicorn,' 'Aigle' and 'Pallas,' I directed to take a station near the Boyart Shoal, for the purpose of receiving the crews of the fire-ships on their return from the enterprise, to support the boats of the fleet which were to accompany the fire-ships, and to give assistance to the 'Impérieuse' which was still further advanced. The 'Whiting' schooner, 'King George' and 'Nimrod' cutters, were fitted for throwing rockets, and directed to take a station near the same shoal for that purpose. The 'Indefatigable,' 'Foxhound' and 'Etna' bomb, were to take a station as near the fort on the Isle of Aix as possible; the two former to protect the bomb vessel whilst she threw shells into the fort. The 'Emerald,' 'Dotterel' and 'Beagle' sloops, and 'Growler,' 'Conflict' and 'Insolent' gun-brigs, were stationed to make a diversion at the east end of the Isle of Aix. The 'Redpole' and 'Lyra' I directed to be anchored by the Masters of the Fleet (one near the Isle of Aix, and the other near the Boyart), with lights hoisted, to guide the fire-ships in their course to the attack; and the boats of the fleet were ordered to assemble alongside the 'Cæsar,' to proceed to assist the fire-ships, under the superintendence of Rear-Admiral Stopford.

With these preconcerted movements the fleet was at this time anchored, in readiness to render any service that

might be practicable, but being anchored in a strong tide-way, with the wind fresh from the N.W. upon the weather-tide making, it was again moored, to prevent the ships falling on board each other. At about half-past eight P.M., the explosion-vessels and fire-ships proceeded to the attack; at half-past nine the first explosion-vessel blew up, and at ten most of the fire-ships were observed to be on fire, the enemy's forts and ships firing on them. Many of the fire-ships were seen to drive through their fleet, and beyond the Isle of Aix. Shortly after day-light, Lord Cochrane, who, in the 'Impérieuse,' lay about three miles from the enemy, made the signal to me by telegraph that seven of the enemy's ships were on shore, and that half the fleet could destroy them. It was visible from the 'Caledonia' what ships were aground, and that two or three had made their escape up the Charente. I immediately ordered the fleet to be unmoored, and at half-past nine weighed, and run up near to the Isle of Aix, with the view, when the time of tide should render it advisable, that some of the line-of-battle ships might proceed to attack the enemy's ships on shore; but the wind blowing fresh from N.N.W., with a flood-tide, I judged it unadvisable to risk any of them, at that time, in so perilous a situation. The fleet was therefore anchored. I made the signal for each ship to prepare, with spare or sheet cables out of the stern-ports, and springs on them, to be in readiness for any of them to go in that I might judge necessary; in the meanwhile I ordered three additional fire-ships to be prepared.

Observing the 'Impérieuse' to advance, and the time of flood nearly done running, the 'Indefatigable,' 'Unicorn,' 'Aigle,' 'Emerald,' 'Pallas,' 'Beagle,' 'Etna,' and gun-

brigs were ordered, by signal, in to the attack. At 2.20, P.M., the former opened her fire upon the enemy's ships aground, and the others as soon after as they arrived up. I then ordered in the 'Valiant' and 'Revenge' to support them, and they soon joined in the action.

The enemy's ship 'Calcutta' struck her colours at 4.10, P.M., and the 'Ville de Varsovie' and 'Aquilon' in about an hour afterwards; all three were taken possession of by the boats of the advanced squadron, and set on fire as soon as the prisoners were removed; a short time after, the 'Tonnerre' was set on fire by the enemy.

Perceiving, towards the close of day, that there were some of the enemy's grounded ships lying further up towards the Charente, which appeared to be exposed to further attack, I sent in the three additional fire-ships and all the boats of the fleet, with Mr. Congreve's rockets, accompanied by the 'Cæsar' and 'Theseus,' under the direction of Rear-Admiral Stopford, with discretional orders for his acting as he should think fit, and according as circumstances should render it expedient. On the following day (the 13th), the Rear-Admiral perceiving that nothing further could be effected by the line-of-battle ships, which had grounded, as had also some of the frigates, and how imminent the danger was in which they lay, and being satisfied that the remaining part of the service could be performed only by frigates and smaller vessels, he most wisely took advantage of a providential shift of wind, and returned with the line-of-battle ships to Basques Road.

Captain Bligh, on his return, reported to me that it was found impracticable to destroy the enemy's three-decked ship and others, which were lying at the entrance

of the Charente, as the former (which was the outer one) was protected by three lines of boats placed in advance from her. During the remainder of the 13th, the 'Etna' was employed in throwing shells, the 'Whiting' schooner in firing rockets, and the other small vessels in firing upon the enemy's ships on shore, when the tide permitted.

On the 14th, at daylight, I observed three or four of the enemy's ships still apparently aground at the mouth of the river. I ordered Captain Wolfe, of the 'Aigle,' to relieve Lord Cochrane in the 'Impérieuse,' in command of the small vessels advanced, and to use his utmost endeavours to destroy any of the enemy's ships which were assailable. At 2.50 the 'Etna' bomb and small vessels in shore, began their fire upon the enemy's ships at the entrance of the Charente, and continued to do so during the remainder of the day. On the 15th, in the morning (the day on which I despatched Sir H. Neale to their Lordships in the 'Impérieuse'), three of the enemy's line-of-battle ships were observed to be still aground under Fouras, and one of them in a dangerous situation; one of their frigates (L'Indienne), also on shore, had fallen over, and the enemy were dismantling her. It blew very strong from the westward the whole of the 15th and 16th, so that no attempt could be made to annoy and harass the enemy; on the latter day, their frigate, which was on shore, was discovered to be on fire, and blew up soon after. All the remainder of the enemy's ships got up the river by the 17th, except one (a two decker) which remained aground under the town of Fouras; in the afternoon of this day, it was observed that another of the enemy's frigates had got on shore up the river, and was

wrecked, which was afterwards confirmed by the master of a neutral vessel from Rochelle.

On the 19th it blew too violently for any of the small vessels to act against the enemy; but on the 20th, the 'Thunder' bomb having arrived, and the weather having become more moderate, I sent her to assist the 'Etna' in bombarding the enemy's ship on shore near Fouras. The 'Etna' had split her 13-inch mortar on the 15th, consequently had only her 10-inch effective; and the Thunder's 18-inch was also rendered unserviceable this day, from the same cause. The following day I went in my boat into the Roads, on board the 'Aigle' and 'Pallas,' to reconnoitre the enemy's ship above mentioned, and ascertain what further operations could be carried on for her destruction; that evening and the succeeding days the wind was too violent and unfavourable. On the 23rd, I gave directions to Captain Wolfe to put two of the 'Aigle's' 18-pound long guns into each of the four gun-brigs and use every means in his power to drive the enemy out of the ship near Fouras, and attempt to set her on fire; the whole of the 24th was employed in this attempt; the 10-inch mortars throwing their shells occasionally, but without success; and as Captain Wolfe reported to me that this attack made very little impression upon the enemy, and that the ships and vessels which were advanced above the Boyart shoal, in order to carry on these operations, were in a situation much exposed to attack from the enemy's gun-boats, &c. I considered any further attempt would be fruitless, and therefore withdrew them from their advanced position.

The enemy's ship continued aground near Fouras until the night of the 28th, when having lightened her very considerably, and applied great exertion to get her afloat,

the spring tides having set in, they succeeded in their attempt and got her up the river. Their Lordships will perceive, from the foregoing statement, as well as from their own knowledge of the local situation of the scene of action, that I was obliged to have a second object in view; for, besides the destruction of the enemy's ships, the greatest care was required that His Majesty's fleet should not be sacrificed; the state of the tide and wind were most materially to be attended to, and, without reference to the chart of the anchorage, nothing can better exemplify the limited space and danger of the navigation than the circumstance of one of the enemy's line-of-battle ships having, on their fleet entering the Roads in February last, run on shore on the shoal of the Palles and being there totally wrecked. There are some circumstances mentioned in my letter of the 14th ultimo, which I have thought it not necessary to repeat or enlarge upon.

When it is considered with how little, or comparatively no loss, the most important service has been performed, their Lordships, I am persuaded, will agree with me, that there is great cause for rejoicing at the result of the undertaking.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
(Signed) GAMBIER.

THE END.

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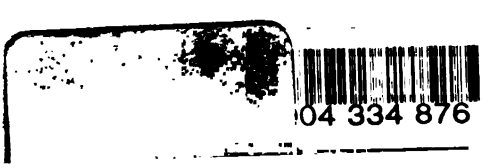
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